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WHITE DAWN

A LEGEND of TICONDEROGA

By

THEODORA PECK

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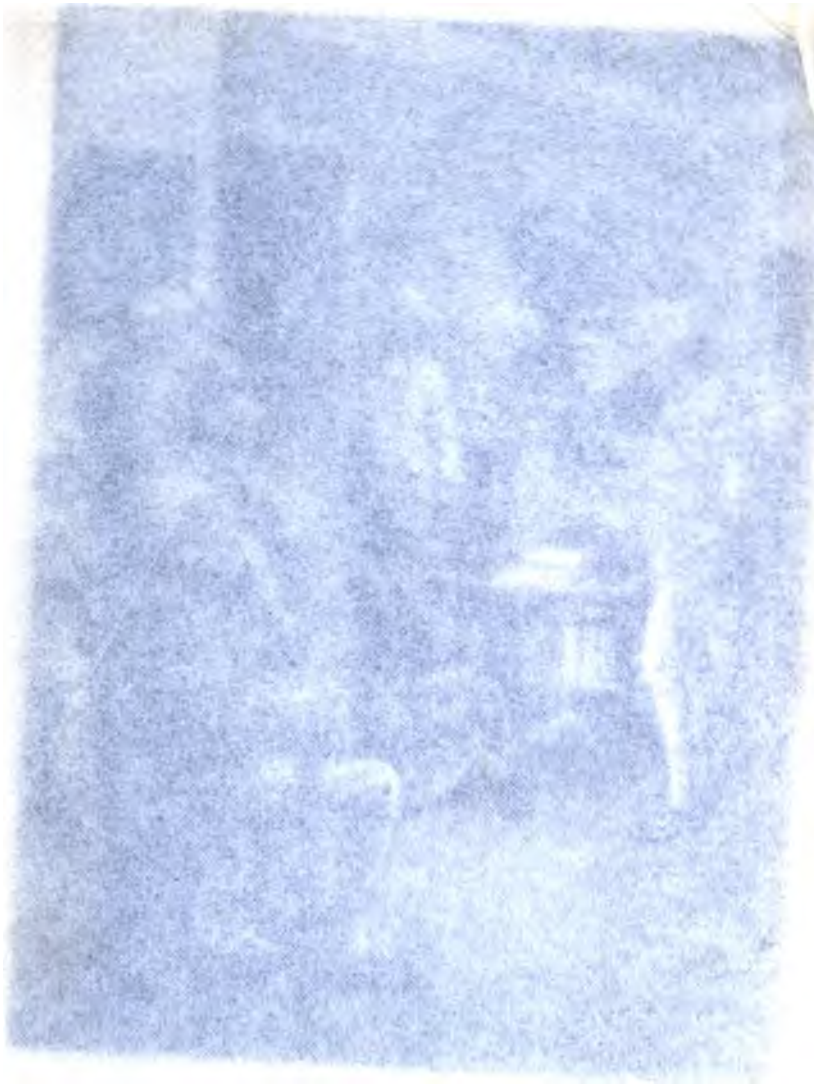
She knelt, imploring hands outstretched, a picture of pleading beauty

(See page 226.)



WHITE DAWN

A LEGEND OF TICONDEROGA

BY

THEODORA PECK
Author of "Hester of the Grants" and "The Sword of Dundee"

Illustrated

NEW YORK CHICAGO TORONTO
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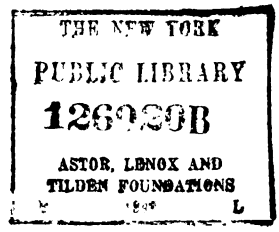

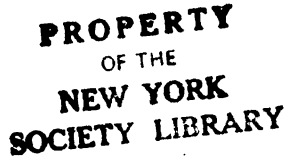

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To my dear friend

MAJOR IRA HOBART EVANS.

A gallant soldier and a noble man.

"So, by my visionary shore,
Soldier and saint and sagamore
Live in my shadow evermore:
Where, lapt in beauty, sleeps Champlain,
Lulled are the passion and the pain;
The legend and the race remain."

—PERCY MACKAYE, *Ticonderoga.*

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I

THE FORT OF THE CHIMING BELLS

"AH, but, father, you would not have had us leave him to his fate? A few weeks more on that dreadful Island, and Flying Swallow tells me he would certainly have died!"

"Flying Swallow tells you too much," said Alan Stuart morosely. "I would we had not meddled in the matter."

"But, father, what harm can come to us from showing kindness to a prisoner?" The girl spoke pleadingly, her fair face vaguely troubled.

"Ah, I know not, Grace—perhaps 'tis only a fancy of mine—but my mind runs ever upon trouble, as ye know."

"Because the days behind you have been evil, father, why should the days to come be evil, too? They cannot be! They shall not be!" And with a protective movement she threw her arms about his neck.

"Misfortune has her favourites, lass, as well as Fortune, and she has long since chosen me to bear her company." Sighing deeply, he stroked her rounded cheek. "But the prisoner may not bring us sorrow, despite the omen. Come, let us watch for the canoe."

Alan Stuart and his daughter sat on the edge of a knoll sloping gently to the margin of the deep blue

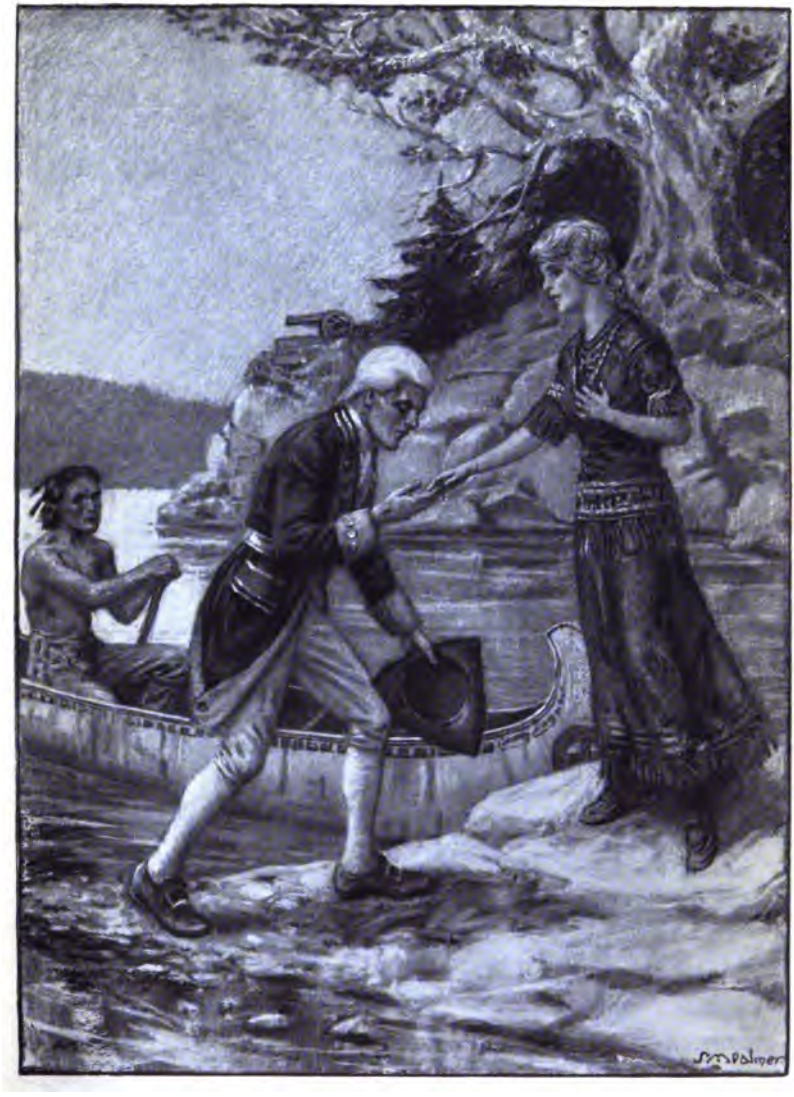
bay. In front of them the land ended abruptly in a wooded point that frowned above the water, and here a white-coated sentry stood guard, and cannon, pointed lakeward, looked a mute defiance on all invaders.

The lake, glinting like polished armour in the sun, was the lake that Samuel de Champlain loved and named; and the fort on the green ridge behind them, with the fleur-de-lis floating from its grey ramparts, was Fort Carillon, destined to be famed in after-years by its old Indian name—Ticonderoga. It was an early April day of the year 1758, and the woods across the water, sweeping unbroken to the horizon, were just misting over with the green of spring. Southward, beyond the bay, rose the bold dark sweep of forest-clad mountains, range upon range, the intervening valleys filled to overflowing, like giant goblets, with the purple nectar of the mist, the green rounded shapes of the nearer hills, now shadowed by drifting clouds, now gleamed upon by the flitting April sunshine—the country of Champlain—the loveliest land in all the world.

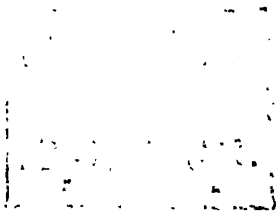
A long silence followed Alan Stuart's words. Grace sat motionless, her arms circling her knees, her eager gaze turned southward. The Scotsman, one hand propping his chin, the other plucking abstractedly at the blades of young grass, glanced musingly at her wistful face.

"Father, father, yonder comes the canoe!"

The girl sprang up, her gaze fastened upon a tiny speck just visible on the shimmering expanse to the southward. Breathlessly she watched it grow till it



Taking Grace's hand in his, he lifted it to his lips



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finally took shape before her eyes as a slim birch canoe containing two figures—one wearing the scarlet of the British uniform—a brilliant splash of colour against the blue background—and the other a rude dress of deerskin. The latter plied the paddle vigorously, and the canoe leaped ahead like a thing of life. As it approached the point the sharp challenge, "Qui vive?" rang out from the Grenadier Battery, but the answer "Amis de la France" from the oarsman seemed sufficient guarantee of good faith, and the little craft continued on its way shoreward.

Grace ran lightly down to the water's edge and poised there, expectant, as the canoe glided to land, its prow grating gently against the pebbles. Seeing her, the scarlet figure, which had been huddled dejectedly in the bow, rose weakly, lifting a gold-laced hat in a feeble attempt at greeting. The girl's eyes widened with pity, for the man before her, worn by eight months' harsh imprisonment, was pitifully pale, with great hollows under his grey eyes. Laughing eyes they had always been till suffering had for the time being stricken all the laughter out of them. He was perhaps twenty-five, looking even younger because of a certain charming immaturity, betokening a boyish gaiety oddly at variance with his present condition.

He now stepped slowly from the canoe, and taking Grace's hand in his, lifted it to his lips. Her shy yet eager greeting was lost in murmurs of pity, for the movement had revealed the marks of chains upon his wrist. Amazement was dawning in the stranger's eyes. The girl whose hand he had kissed wore a dress

of brown fringed deerskin, her small feet were shod in beaded moccasins, and about her neck was a chain of purple wampum from which hung a silver crucifix. Her hair was plaited in a single long, thick braid. Golden, auburn, chestnut, and russet were blended in its hue, and each in its most wonderful shade. It was such hair as Titian loved to paint, and made immortal in his pictures of fair Venetian women. Her great brown eyes met his as frankly as a child's; the colour did not deepen on the soft cheek which the sun had kissed to a warm rose.

"Ah, mademoiselle, how shall I ever repay——" the young man was beginning, when the approach of Alan Stuart cut short his avowal.

The Scotsman, who had hitherto stood aloof on the little knoll, a frowning witness of the scene, greeted the prisoner courteously yet coldly, as one not fully prepossessed in his favour, or labouring under some latent prejudice. He was conscious that the stranger roused in him a strange disquietude too vague to be either portent or memory. The young man's amazement deepened. Here, in this northern wilderness, where he had expected to find only Indians and French habitants, was a girl whose beauty and grace a queen might envy; and this stern man, though he wore a dress no richer than buckskin, and a weapon no courtlier than a knife, bore the unmistakable stamp of a gentleman.

"So, Captain Aubrey, they have lengthened your prison-chain a little? May it soon be severed altogether!"

"If such kindness be a chain, I shall never wish to

be free of it," Aubrey answered, glancing involuntarily at the girl's lovely face. "Is it you, sir, whom I should thank for my release?"

"It is my daughter, Captain Aubrey, to whom thanks are due," replied Alan Stuart, a shade more coldly; then, seeming to regret his words, paused before continuing: "She heard of your evil plight on Prisoners' Island, and would not rest till she had secured from General Montcalm an order for you to be brought to Carillon. It is she whom you should thank, not I."

The young man seemed rather pleased than otherwise with the change of debtors. He proceeded with alacrity to offer gratitude to the proper recipient.

"But, Captain Aubrey, it is really Flying Swallow who caused your release," Grace interposed earnestly, indicating the young Abnaki, who had remained seated in the canoe, a silent and motionless spectator. "I should never have known of you had he not brought me the tidings."

Aubrey dismissed the Indian from consideration with a careless gesture. "No, no, with such a number and variety of creditors I should become a bankrupt in gratitude. I prefer your father's version. It is you I claim as my creditor for life—for it is my life I owe you." The last words were in a lower tone.

"Come, come, Captain Aubrey," Stuart interrupted, "we must not make you prodigal of thanks. You will be needing rest and refreshment, for you are, I see, far from strong. Let me lend you an arm to the fort yonder where you may find a brief repose, and

hold converse with General Montcalm concerning your parole,—for we dwell, as ye must know, at Fort St. Frédéric, twelve good English miles away, and we should be there by sundown, if your strength permits."

So saying, Alan Stuart drew the young man's arm through his, and led him up the slope toward the not distant fort, thus shutting the door upon confidences and performing a kindly act at one and the same time.

Grace walked at Aubrey's other side, and whenever he turned his head in that direction—which was not infrequently—he found her eyes resting upon him in shy friendliness, and with no more self-consciousness than a child.

The fort, facing the rising sun, stood on high ground, bounded on three sides by water, and backed by a wall of forest. So still was the air that the soft chimes of the distant falls, which had given the fort its name, could be distinctly heard.

"It was well called 'Carillon,'" said Alan Stuart, as they reached the sallyport; "of summer nights the sentries pacing these ramparts fancy they hear the churchbells of their native France. There to the southwestward, hidden deep in forest, lies St. Sacrement—Lake George, you English call it—you will not be forgetting it soon, I fancy? And yonder, across that blue strait, is the Wilderness. Iroquois and Algonquin, Frenchman and Briton have roamed it, but none has ever dared to make a settlement there. Yet 'tis a fair country,—'a land of beautiful valleys and fields fertile in corn,' Champlain called it—a land wherein to build happy homes, if Saxon and Gaul would ever cease their strife—Heaven knows when that will be!—

Go, lass, bid Flying Swallow await us an hour hence on the north shore with the canoe." Then, as the girl fluttered away, "Come, captain, let us go within."

The fort, before whose sallyport they stood, was constructed in the form of an irregular square, with four bastions built of logs and earth. Aubrey, with his companion, passed along the entrance-way between the steep brown earthworks to an open space surrounded by stone barracks, and presently found himself on the threshold of a small, scantily-furnished room. There rose to meet them a man wearing the dazzling white uniform of France with the insignia of the highest rank. Although not tall, he possessed the dignity of height. His face, keen and animated, with bright, glancing black eyes—the face of one born to command—was also gentle and kindly. It was hard to believe that upon this man—so courtly, gracious, and debonair—rested, justly or unjustly, the blame for that darkest blot upon colonial history—the massacre of Fort William Henry.

Montcalm now came forward, bowing courteously, with a French grace of movement and gesture.

"Ah, le Capitaine Aubrey, give me the great pleasure to welcome you to Carillon. Would I might so welcome every Englishman who comes hither! Nay, monsieur, do not thank me for being the humble instrument of your deliverance. The happiness that it gives me——"

In the act of grasping Aubrey's extended hand he had caught sight of the chain-marks on the young man's wrist, and his gay manner altered instantly.

"It grieves me deeply to see these, Captain Au-

brey,"—regret was in his voice. "This is not the usage one gentleman willingly accords another. Doubtless you know the reason for such harsh measures: when first we were obliged to confine our English prisoners on the Island at St. Sacrement several waded off and escaped, and it then became expedient to use chains. Such treatment comports not with my desire, monsieur,—it is a cruel necessity of war."

Aubrey bent his head in reply to Montcalm's vindication, but did not speak, and the Marquis continued quickly:

"As a tribute to a gallant foe, permit me, monsieur, to restore to you your sword. You are released on parole within the limits of our lines; and I promise you liberty as soon as we can find a French prisoner of equal rank with whom to exchange you. Meantime, with Major Stuart for your host, you will not lack for hospitality. And now, monsieur, as I see you are faint from your journey, be my guest for the hour, and let me offer you some slight refreshment."

Aubrey had met Montcalm's advances with courtesy, but not without reserve, as if he did not fully trust this suave French gentleman. But now, convinced by the sincerity of the Marquis's voice and manner, the shadow of misgiving left his face, and he responded without restraint to the other's cordiality. As he sat down to the partridge, white bread, and good red wine provided by the Marquis's hospitality—the first satisfying meal he had eaten in nearly nine months—he felt his heart warm toward his host of the hour, and was willing to value as true vintage what he had previously labelled mere froth of courtesy.

An hour later Aubrey and Alan Stuart left Carillon by its northern entrance, and passing from under the shadow of its stern ramparts, found Grace and Flying Swallow awaiting them with the canoe where the low green shores below the fort * afforded an easy landing-place. The girl was seated on a rock, her chin sunk in her hand, apparently absorbed in reverie, for she started, as they appeared, like a dreamer awakened. The young Abnaki, at whom Aubrey did hardly more than glance, still kept his statuesque pose in the stern of the canoe.

They quickly embarked, Alan Stuart and the Indian plied the paddles, and the Fort of the Chiming Bells, soon to acquire a more fearful celebrity, faded into the distance behind them, as the canoe sped northward across the smooth blue waters of Champlain.

* It was here that Ethan Allen landed when he took the fort, May 10, 1775.

II

FLAMELIGHT

"IF Quebec was the head, Ticonderoga and Fort St. Frédéric were the mailed hands of the French power." Where two points of land ran out to meet each other, and, failing, left a slender waterway between them—the lake narrowed to the width of a river—Fort St. Frédéric rose, frowning, from its headland. Built in 1731 by the Marquis de Beauharnois, Governor-General of Canada, named for Frédéric Maurepas, the French Secretary of Foreign Affairs,—with the "saint" added for good measure—it had stood for a quarter of a century the southermost warder of France, the key to that lake so aptly named by her savage enemies, the Iroquois, "Can-i-a-de-ri Gua-run-te," "The Gate of the Country."

To this wild lake-fortress on Pointe de la Couronne (Crown Point) had come Alan Stuart and his daughter in that fateful year "'46," which shattered the Jacobite hopes and sent so many Scottish exiles overseas to France. But to Alan Stuart, with a heavy price upon his head and a heavier weight upon his heart, France had seemed too near. He had been feverishly eager to put unnumbered miles of stormy sea between him and Scotland. Yet not even Quebec, remote upon its rock, nor Indian-threatened Hochelaga, had been far enough from the world of men to

satisfy the Scotsman's hunted soul. It was in Fort St. Frédéric—this final trysting-place of savagery and civilization—that Alan Stuart found a refuge fitted to his needs. Here he would encounter neither the Englishmen he hated nor the countrymen he feared. Beneath the golden lilies there was sanctuary.

Memories of those days surged through Alan Stuart's mind with reawakened bitterness upon this sunny April afternoon as he and Philip Aubrey sat together near the stone wind-mill * crowning the redoubt on Pointe de la Couronne.

"Do you remember 'the '45?'" Alan Stuart asked with an effort.

"Only dimly, I must confess," the young man answered. "I was but thirteen then, we lived in Devon beyond the stir of it, and my father was not a Jacobite, but I recall a lurking wish that Prince Charlie would march to London, so that I could see the clans and plaids and broadswords, and wear a white rose in my cap."

"Ah, the clans!" cried Alan Stuart, a strange exultant thrill in his voice. "How they marched, how they fought, how they died!" He paused, then smote the log on which they sat with an impetuous hand. "Perhaps 'twas not in vain. The Prince may come again, who knows——"

He ceased to speak, and his eyes took on that brooding, abstracted look, the outward symbol of a soul lost in the haze of memory. It was so evident that he saw nothing of the blue band of lake, the greening woods, the cloud-swept April sky.

* The site of the Champlain memorial-lighthouse.

Aubrey glanced at him and away again with ill-concealed impatience. What he wished was not to sit here listening to a Jacobite's wild daydreams, but to wander through this delicious April world with his fair deliverer. If only it were possible for him to steal away unobserved and go in search of her! But he dared not trust the Scotsman's abstraction thus far! He smiled as he recalled how assiduously Alan Stuart had kept watch over his daughter during the week of his sojourn at St. Frédéric. Well, he would yet find a way to evade this surveillance, and make better friends with this lovely dryad.

The thought had scarcely crossed his mind for this the twentieth time when a fluttering sound behind him caught his wandering attention. He turned quickly to see two brown-clad figures leave the woods at the foot of the slope, and come flying toward him up the knoll. It was Grace and the Abnaki, Flying Swallow. They ran abreast, skimming the ground as lightly and as easily as two young fawns. Aubrey seemed to be the goal, for here the race ended, as the girl, with a playful tap on Flying Swallow's arm, tossed her splendid hair out of her eyes, and dropped upon the log beside the prisoner with scarcely quickened breath.

A classic fancy might have pictured her and her companion as two youthful Greeks running to win some laurel-wreath in the golden days of Athens. Surely Atalanta, and Hippomenes—befriended of Venus—never ran more gracefully, were never more lithe of body or light of limb than these two strange playmates—the Highland girl and the young Algonquin; she, with the rare wood-browns of her dress

blending in perfect harmony with the chestnut golden of her hair and the liquid hazel of her eyes, he with the slender supple grace of a catamount.

"Which of you won?" asked Aubrey with a smile of admiration for the girl.

She gave a merry rippling laugh. "We both won, but it was not much of a race—only a mile or so up from the cabin. We have often run much farther—Flying Swallow and I," accompanying the last words by a bright glance at the young Indian whose austere features relaxed into the shadow of a smile.

Alan Stuart, shaking off his reverie, rose with one of his rare laughs.

"So the kitten is at her tricks again. Well, well, you are young—play while ye may—there are years enough for thinking. But look—the sun is low; 'tis time to turn homeward."

It was, indeed, near sunset, and the west was all aflame with rose and saffron. The shadows of coming night lay long on the opposite Pointe à la Chevalure.* The lake, like some fair naiad, had doffed her shimmering robe of silver, and donned the radiant mantle of the sunset; a lovely Lorelei—decked in the golden tresses of the sunbeams—luring to herself all nations. The lofty ranges of the Adirondacks, and the blue peaks to the eastward rose like a sapphire rampart shutting in the valley. The forest, in its green vastness, encroaching on all sides upon the slender clearing, was a mighty wave of verdure that had overflowed the land and curled its emerald crest to the very verge of the opal-vestured lake.

*Now known as Chimney Point.

As they walked slowly homeward, Aubrey looked long at the tall stone tower of St. Frédéric, with cannon mounted in its deep embrasures—the citadel whence had gone forth those war-parties of savage red men and no less savage white which had wasted with flame and sword the New England border. There were dungeons beneath those massive walls, as he well knew, wherein English prisoners had suffered long captivity, and he shuddered at the thought that he—save for a turn of Fate's dice—might easily have been of the number.

"And there next the tower is the chapel, Captain Aubrey," Grace was saying, "where good Father Caron says Mass. He gave me this"—touching reverently the crucifix at her neck.—"He wishes to make me a Catholic, but of course I cannot let him do that, although it grieves me to refuse him."

She spoke with a sweet emphasis. Aubrey, whose religious proclivities were of the vaguest, was more absorbed in the beauty of her face than in what she was saying.

Presently they reached the little settlement which clustered along the deep western bay—a long, irregular street, paved with broken stone, and bordered by miniature log dwellings, each surrounded by its orchard and carefully tended garden and fields that would ripen later in wheat and Indian corn. The cabin which Alan Stuart called home was a low one-story structure of hewn logs—in summer wreathed with morning-glories—and set in a small enclosure which a month hence would be green with foliage and bright with bloom.

Within the cabin there was rude comfort. The walls and floor were spread with gaily coloured blankets and skins of moose and bear. Above the chimney-piece hung two crossed swords—claymores that had dealt bold blows for Prince Charlie at Culloden. In one corner of the room stood a quaint Scottish harp; in another a spinning-wheel, wound with flax. Everything bespoke Old World refinement tempering New World rudeness.

As they entered, there tripped from the fireside to meet them a coquettishly pretty girl in the picturesque Normandy dress. She swept them a gay French curtsey, with a glance half-shy, half-saucy for Captain Aubrey, and a toss of the head for Flying Swallow. Dorette, whose rôle was more companion than maid—was a protégée of Grace's—an orphan, brought up by a frivolous Parisian aunt who had married an officer at St. Frédéric, and had been only too glad to resign the wayward girl into Alan Stuart's charge.

Two hours later, when the soft spring dusk had fallen, and the yellow moon had risen over the valley of Champlain, the little company of exiles gathered around a leaping camp-fire on a pine-clad knoll beyond the cabin. Through a gap in the trees they caught glimpses of Bulwagga Bay just beginning to be silvered by the moon.

The crimson flamelight illumined the faces of these chance companions: Aubrey, winsome and debonair, though pale from captivity; the flower-like beauty of Grace; the stern and brooding aspect of Alan Stuart; the statuesque immobility of Flying Swallow.

Another had been added to their number:—Red

Plume, the father of Flying Swallow, who had been the friend and protégé of Alan Stuart since the Scotsman's coming to St. Frédéric twelve years before. Gloomy and morose, Alan Stuart, while shunning all of his own race, seemed to find fellowship in the brooding, smouldering soul of the Indian. Both were virtually exiles from home and clan; behind them both lay a troubled past, darkened by bitterness and revenge; before them both the future loomed portentous. What mattered difference of race and skin with such kinship at the core!

Algonquin imagery had likened Red Plume to a rock—cold, stern, and rugged: Flying Swallow to a young pine, tall, slender, unbending, defiant of storm and danger; Alan Stuart to a mountain oak—a name that linked the Stuart emblem with the heather-hills of Scotland;—and his daughter to a flower,—a white blossom, drifting on the winds of May to nestle in the oak.

Aubrey, seated on a mossy log beside Grace, studied curiously the stern features of Red Plume as he stood with folded arms in the full glare of the firelight, the single crimson feather in his head-dress pointing upward like a finger dipped in blood.

Aubrey had heard the Indian's story, and, indifferent as he was, it haunted him.

Red Plume, warrior and sachem, exiled from the Zooquagese,—as the Abnakis of the St. Francis called themselves—because of his persistent refusal to become a Christian, had wandered at last to St. Frédéric, where he found fierce employment in the border-raids against the English. His wife and several children had died of a pestilence years before; of all his family

only two were left to him: a son just entering manhood, called for his fleetness, Flying Swallow, and a daughter of eighteen, as wild and beautiful as a fawn, named Floating Cloud, for her small feet flitted over the earth as lightly as a summer cloud. If the rock symbolized the chief's stern nature, then his love for his children was the tendril that entwined it.

One day, during the absence of Red Plume and Flying Swallow on a hunting-excursion, a French officer, in whom Floating Cloud's dark beauty had waked an evil passion, seized the girl and carried her off to Fort Carillon, then just completed.

For many days her abductor tried blandishments and threats on Floating Cloud in vain. One night the end came. The Frenchman had compelled his captive to walk with him upon the ramparts of Carillon. The night was intensely dark, with no light save from the stars. Upon reaching the southwest bastion all the smouldering passion of the man broke forth, and he seized her in his arms. Though a garrison were within call, she was utterly at his mercy. Vainly she repulsed him, scorning futile outcry. Many feet below the bastion lay a ledge of rock. The Indian girl made a terrible choice. With a superhuman effort she wrenched herself from his grasp, sprang with a single bound to the parapet, poised there an instant motionless, her face wildly beautiful, upraised to the stars, then, without a cry, leaped from the parapet, to lie, an instant later, a huddled lifeless figure on the rocks below. The eagle-blood had preferred death to dishonour.

When, at daybreak the next morning, Red Plume

and Flying Swallow, accompanied by Father Caron, arrived at the fort and demanded the captive girl, the guilty commandant, awed by the priest's accusing eyes, revealed the tragic truth. A quiver contracted Red Plume's stern features, then they hardened into calm. The commandant attempted to press some coins into his hand as a slight assuagement of his grief, but with a look from which the Frenchman shrunk, the Indian flung the gold upon the ground. He uttered no audible curses; he simply stood a moment motionless, his arms raised toward Heaven, as if invoking the vengeance of the Great Spirit upon this hideous wrong. Then, without a word, he lifted the body of the dead girl in his arms and left the fort.

When, almost immediately, he returned, it was to demand the murderer, and, failing to receive justice—the guilty man having fled the country—the exiled chief stood for a little looking narrowly at the French fort with a sinister light in his eyes.

Henceforth, Red Plume cherished toward the French a hatred none the less intense because its fires smouldered. To desert openly to England would have answered neither his nature nor his purpose. He preferred to lurk and lie in wait in savage fashion, knowing, with Indian cunning, he could thus drive deeper the dagger of revenge. Failing to sate itself upon the guilty object, Red Plume's vengeance struck at him through France. Many a secret strangely revealed to the enemy, many a mysterious deed of bloodshed,—of French outposts surprised and slain by some unknown assassin,—might have been traced to the wigwam of the Abnaki chief. But all these strokes were dealt

with such adroitness that none of the French authorities suspected the silent impassive Indian to be the perpetrator.

There was another side to this tragedy of Carillon of which only Father Caron knew. The good priest, who had baptized Floating Cloud, and had long striven to turn the wayward souls of Red Plume and Flying Swallow toward Christ, now found their hearts forever steeled against his pleadings. Never would Red Plume receive the sign of the cross on his brow; he wore henceforth the seal of the avenger of blood.

Flying Swallow was a masculine cast of his sister's beauty:—he had the physical perfection of a superb bronze statue into which the Master-Sculptor had breathed the breath of life.

"Brother," said Grace, speaking across the fire to Flying Swallow, "brother, when you stand thus I think of that night three years ago"—her voice died away into silence.

"Why do you call him 'brother'?" said Aubrey suddenly.

The girl turned visionary eyes to his.

"He *is* my brother by adoption, and as dear to me as a real brother. It is a long story.—Wait, I will tell you: Ten years ago, when I was a little child, a fire broke out in the woods where I was playing. Enveloped in flames, I ran shrieking through the forest with Flying Swallow's name upon my lips. Then, before I can tell you, Flying Swallow had burst through the ring of fire, seized me in his arms, and was beating out the flames. My dress was burned to shreds, but I was hardly scorched. He saved my life

at the risk of his own. His hands were badly burned —you can see the scars still."

"I wish I had been there," said Aubrey softly. "I, too, would have given my life for yours if need be."

"I am sure you would," she said simply and without embarrassment. "You see, when anyone has done us a great kindness, we Scots, in token of gratitude, adopt him as a brother, bound to us forever by ties as strong as blood. So from that day Flying Swallow and I have been brother and sister. This chain of purple wampum is the sign." She paused, and her eyes again grew dreamy as she continued: "Three years ago my father and Flying Swallow and I went to see a princess of the Abnakis—a sorceress she was called. We gathered around an open fire like this. To-night recalls it afresh. The woman—she was very old and shrivelled—looked strangely at Flying Swallow and at me. She took a flaming fagot in her hand and drew a ring of fire about us—so—saying: 'Thus shall ye twain be bound by the ring of flame. Behold, I, the mother of warriors, have spoken it.' Those words have haunted me ever since. I never remember them without a shudder."

During this conversation Alan Stuart, from across the fire, had studied Aubrey moodily, watching the flamelight play upon the handsome boyish face. Something about the prisoner was vaguely troubling to the Scotsman, as if the waters of memory had been stirred by some long-hidden undercurrent. Yet when he grappled with the pursuing shadow there was nothing tangible that he could touch, and the whole dissolved in his grasp like a phantom wrestler. He knew it was

only a feverish fancy that made the dead past live again in every unfamiliar face.

Aubrey, unpleasantly conscious of this scrutiny, turned again to Grace who had resumed her dreamy contemplation of the fire.

"Perhaps you would care to know something of my story," he began, then, encouraged by her smile, "I was born in Devonshire, England, twenty-five years since, and I lived there until my father's death. Then —twelve years ago—my mother and I—there being little left of my father's estate—came to America to live with her kinsmen here. You see I am rightly an American, for though I was born in England, I grew to manhood in America. My father was an Englishman, but my mother was Scotch—a Highlander. Her name was Marjory Campbell."

Alan Stuart started violently. "Marjory Campbell!" he cried below his breath.

Aubrey, inwardly amazed at the Scotsman's emotion, did not appear to notice it.

"Her name was Marjory Campbell," he repeated— "she was of the Campbells of Loch Awe—a wild and turbulent race they must have been. I remember as if it were yesterday my mother's coming to me in our English home—I was but a boy of ten—snatching me in her arms and sobbing out: 'My brother Donald has been murdered. That will mean feud and bloodshed in the Highlands. I am glad my little boy will never feel the curse of the avenger of blood.'

"I suppose she was not truly Highland or she would have invoked fierce vengeance upon her brother's murderer; but she had left Scotland at fifteen to live with

relatives in England, where, three years later, she married my father; she had never visited the Highlands since, and her brother was many years older than herself and could hardly have been more to her than a memory. She did not even know the name of his murderer."

Aubrey paused to gaze into the fire as if he saw therein the picture of his mother and himself which he had just portrayed. Thus he did not notice Alan Stuart, upon whom had come a strange transformation. The Scotsman breathed rapidly, and his whole form was rigid with suppressed emotion. His eyes dilated, and his hands were clenched at his sides. Some moments passed before he mastered the feeling which had shaken him.

Aubrey, unconscious of it, resumed his narrative: "There is little more to tell. We dwelt—my mother and I—with her kinsmen, the Gilchrists of Fort Edward, until her death three years ago. Then I entered the King's service as an ensign in the 60th Foot, the Royal Americans as it is called. Last August I had the misfortune to be stationed at Fort William Henry. I was taken prisoner before the fortress fell, thus escaping that frightful massacre, and the rest you know. Eight months on Prisoners' Island have made me what I am—a poor apology for the once gay Philip Aubrey."

With a violent movement Alan Stuart sprang to his feet, facing the prisoner like a lion at bay. Grace had risen also, and he drew her within his arm as if to sunder her from Aubrey. The two figures were silhouetted black against the crimson flamelight.

"You have told your story. Now listen to mine: I

am of the royal race of Stuarts—a Highlander to the hilt. I wedded an Englishwoman and her I adored. But the English trampled my country in the dust, and all Englishmen I hate. I fled, an outlaw, from the red butchery of Scotsmen at Culloden. Ah, you may well boast of it—your English justice!—I tell you the massacre of Fort William Henry was a judgment on England for Culloden!—The English exiled me—the French succoured me—I serve under the lilies. There, you have heard it all!"

Grace gently kissed him. The action said to Aubrey, "Can you blame him?"

Presently Stuart spoke.

"Come, it is time to return to the cabin. We have let the flamelight shine upon the past too long."

Silently Aubrey rose, and silently followed Grace and Alan Stuart into the shade of the forest. Suddenly, moved by a singular impulse, he turned and looked back. Red Plume had disappeared, but Flying Swallow stood as they had left him by the camp-fire, with folded arms and head bent slightly forward. Seen thus—by some deceit of vision—the flames appeared to leap upon him—to envelop him. Grace gave a little cry: "The ring of flame! The ring of flame!"

Then, without heeding Alan Stuart's, "'Tis only a trick of the eye, lass," she turned and ran back toward the fire; and Aubrey saw her stretch out her hands to Flying Swallow with a strange gesture of fear as they stood together in the crimson flamelight which seemed to cast upon their faces the sinister glow of fate.

III

THE MAID OF CARILLON

THAT April month never faded from Philip Aubrey's mind. The memory of it rested upon his life like the April sunshine on the blue depths of Champlain, obscured at times by passing clouds, yet never wholly banished,—at once a radiance and a blessing.

Alan Stuart had ceased to regard the stranger as a menace. Accordingly the days were spent by Grace and Philip in almost hourly companionship. They wandered through budding woods fragrant with a myriad subtile odours; they drifted in the canoe on a lake whose placid mirror was scarcely ruffled by the whispering southern wind.

The magic setting of all this joy was the Champlain country:—its sweet blue distances like fairy vistas opening into Paradise, its gentle rounded hills like mossy pebbles grown to giant size, its softly undulating waters, its mountains a sapphire rampart reared into the crystal vault.

Grace took him to Mass in the little chapel within the fort, and Aubrey looked in amazement at the white-coated soldiers of Béarn and Languedoc, rudely-clad habitants, and painted Algonquins there assembled, and listened indifferently—despite an excellent knowledge

of French—to the words of that ardent Recollect—good Father Caron.

On days too stormy to be out-of-doors Aubrey sat beside the fire-lit hearth in the cabin, listening to the soft whir of the spinning-wheel and watching Grace as she spun.

"You must know," she told him laughingly, "that I have a dress other than deerskin—it is fine homespun, but 'twould become sadly torn in the woods, and as I am such a wanderer, I wear it only on Prince Charlie's birthday." The thread broke in her fingers and her voice grew wistful. "That is the day that Father wears his tartan—the one day in all the year, save for Culloden. Oh, if you could see him then!" Her eyes were glowing. "He is so fine to look upon in his belted plaid of Royal Stuart and his bonnet with the eagle-plumes."

Her voice broke in a sigh, and without further speech she resumed her spinning.

Her attraction for Aubrey—at first merely the kindling of an idle fancy by her beauty—was fast deepening to the strongest passion that had yet moved his careless life.

He loved to hear her sing the haunting Jacobite ballads, sung as only a Scotswoman could sing them—tenderly, ardently, to the weird accompaniment of an ancient Gaelic harp, the twin to that on which Queen Mary waked the echoes of Holyrood.

Oftenest it was the songs of her own royal house that flowed from her lips: "Lovely Spring in the Glen," "The Stuarts' White Banner," "The Lament for Prince Charlie," and, singing, she stirred in Aubrey

the strain of hitherto remotely latent Highland blood, till he thrilled, as only a Highland heart can thrill, at those old Scottish lays of love and war.

And marvellous it was to hear, in this wilderness of the New World, this girl, in whose veins flowed the blood of a royal race, sing these songs of the Old World with a power and a pathos that held the hearer's soul.

A spirit that breathed of Bruce and Bannockburn, of heather-purpled hill and misty glen, of the plaintive sorrows and brief glories of the Stuarts from the fair fated Queen of Holyrood to the belovèd prince of red Culloden.

It was easy to understand why the French called Grace "The Maid of Carillon," for the rich bell-tones of her voice were like softer echoes of the chiming falls by the outlet.

"White Dawn," Flying Swallow's name for his foster-sister, to Aubrey lacked appropriateness; he thought it too pale and colourless to portray the warmth and glow of her beauty. He failed to comprehend the delicate fitness of a name which so perfectly symbolized the virgin purity and freshness of daybreak.

Aubrey considered Flying Swallow a nuisance: otherwise, he did not think of him at all. It seemed to him that wherever he turned the Indian was at his elbow, never inquisitive, never obtrusive, apparently impassive, yet always watchful. The Abnaki was no more in evidence than a statue, yet to Aubrey the sense of being constantly spied upon became unbearable; there were times when he could have turned and struck the silent figure at his side.

Grace and Philip sat in the sweet spring weather on

the green slopes behind Fort St. Frédéric, where to-day stands Lord Amherst's useless and dismantled fort. Coquettish April laughed in the blue cloud-shadowed sky, and wept in the sudden silvery showers which tinkled over the grass, to pass a moment later in a broken drift of bright clouds. Between the trees showed vistas of the lake, deep sapphire in the shadows, but shimmering in the sun like the silver scales of a fish. They were virtually alone. The French sentry, perhaps remembering his own youth, did not glance in their direction.

Grace talked at first shyly, then eagerly of her early memories of Scotland and the "'45," and as she spoke, her colour deepened and her breath came quickly.

"I was only a child of seven the year the Prince came, but I remember it all as if it were yesterday. My father had taken me with him to Edinburgh, and he lifted me up in his arms above the crowd. Oh, I shall never forget the sight of Bonnie Prince Charlie in his tartans and blue bonnet, with his yellow curls streaming over his shoulders and the light of victory in his laughing eyes. And lovely Agnes Leslie—who wielded the sword of Dundee for the Prince—she is a cousin of mine, you know. I remember so vividly seeing her pass up the steps of Holyrood, the night of the great ball, wearing Lydia Leslie's famous yellow satin. How beautiful she was! 'Twas no wonder that she won Prince Charlie's heart! We are said to bear some likeness to each other, but of course she is far the lovelier."

Aubrey, surveying the face beside him, was inclined to doubt it and said as much, but the girl was untouched by the praise.

"If you could see her, you would believe me," she insisted earnestly.

"Your father, I suppose, talks often of those days," said Aubrey after a pause.

"Ah, no," she answered with childlike frankness, "he rarely speaks of them; he seems—I know not why—to dread all reference to them. I suppose it is because he suffered so cruelly," she added, sighing.

A suspicion began to vibrate in Aubrey's mind. Why should Alan Stuart shrink so persistently from any allusion to his native land? He glanced at the fair unshadowed face beside him, and felt ashamed of the suspicion, yet the memory of it lingered. Could Alan Stuart be guilty of some crime? He felt sure that Grace knew no breath of it.

Sometimes they talked of the great war whose shadow lay dark on all the Western World; and Aubrey told her of the English army that ere long was to advance under General Abercrombie to the attack upon Ticonderoga.

"My dearest friend, Lord Howe,—a grandson of the King—has been chosen by Pitt to be second in command; virtually he will lead the army, for he has the gifts of a true commander,—courage, patience, and insight. He is the noblest man I know." Aubrey's face glowed, and his voice rang with enthusiasm.

The girl's eyes caught the light from his. "Oh, how proud you must be of such a friend! I wish that I might know him! What service would be too great to render such a man!"

And Aubrey only smiled at her sweet fervour, powerless to read the portent that lay hidden in her words.

On the morning of the anniversary of Culloden, Alan Stuart appeared in full chieftain's dress as Grace had described him, a tall and stately figure, marked yet more deeply by that air of brooding melancholy for which Aubrey was now ready to assign a reason. The day was still early when he left the cabin in the direction of the forest. Grace, her hand shading her eyes, watched his receding figure out of sight, then, sighing, turned to Aubrey who stood beside her in the doorway.

"It is always so with him on this day of Culloden. He will hide himself in the woods and brood and brood over the lost cause."

"Come," said Aubrey almost impatiently, "let us go out into the sunshine. It is too fair a day to waste in mourning for departed hopes, and I—have something I would say to you." And glancing over his shoulder as they left the cabin he saw to his satisfaction that for once they seemed to have shaken off the surveillance of Flying Swallow.

Presently the two figures, the one in scarlet regimentals, the other in woodland brown, might have been seen moving side by side between the sullen earthworks of St. Frédéric toward the sweet green slopes beyond.

From the shadow of a bastion Flying Swallow watched them go. The girl's face was half averted from Aubrey like a shy flower, and her slender fingers were ceaselessly twisting a fringe of her deerskin gown. But one thing alone held the Abnaki's eye: she was wearing violets in her hair—he had seen Aubrey pluck and place them there a moment before, and she had made no attempt to resist—she, who would never wear a flower because she loved them so, and could not bear

to see them wither. Trivial though it was, the change pierced him. He felt a deepening sense of desolation. He had never for an instant dreamed of Grace as a sweetheart—such a thought would have been sacrilege. His love for her had been always that of a brother; he did not dream that it had changed and taken on new meaning. But the sense of loss was there no less strong. All the pathos of his race and lot enshadowed him like gigantic wings. When at last he moved he moved almost stiffly like one whose limbs had been fettered. He remembered how he had gazed out over these same earthworks a few days before. How unchanged the prospect; how utter and how desolate the change in him. No cyclone of disaster had swept the smiling landscape; in his soul alone lay the pathway of the whirlwind, stark and sere, like a fire-scarred forest where every little flower of joy lies dead and blackened.

Flying Swallow had had many occasions to regret his part in bringing Aubrey to Carillon. Had he been a white man he would have had the solace of invoking curses in his solitude upon the Englishman. Being an Indian, to whom emotion was denied, he must needs forego this alleviation, and possess his soul in bitter patience.

Meantime, all unconscious of surveillance, the lovers passed the turn of the bastion, climbed the gentle slope beyond, and having reached a secluded spot, seated themselves beneath a wide-spreading oak which had often borne them company. To-day, however, they did not talk of war or memories of war. Aubrey, with an impetuous movement, seized her hands.

"Sweetheart, you are to me the saint of St. Frédéric. I am debtor to you in more ways than you know. It was not alone life you gave me.—I am a prisoner to the French, it is true, but I am also a prisoner of love, and to you I surrender, my sweet conqueror!—Yes, it is to you I give my sword, not to the Marquis Montcalm." And playfully he knelt beside her, and loosening the sword from his belt, laid its hilt in her hands.

For the first time the sweet child-eyes that had always looked without faltering into the eyes of man and woman alike, drooped before his ardent gaze. The first blush crimsoned the lovely half-averted face. Aubrey kissed the hands that held the sword.

"Have I really found favour in your eyes, my little 'Grace o' God'? Do you really love me, sweetheart?"

She lifted her clear eyes to his.

"Yes, I love you, Philip."

Aubrey's arm stole around her; he drew the soft cheek against his. But despite her brave avowal she shrank away from him with the instinctive shyness of some woodland creature. A moment thus. Then she started to her feet and stood, a startled dryad, against the oak. The sword, released, fell on the grass between them. Her quicker ears, trained from childhood to detect the slightest sound, had heard steps; and Aubrey had barely time to spring to his feet when the tall figure of Alan Stuart appeared around the corner of the bastion.

IV

THE PROMISE

HE stood a moment motionless, his stern gaze shifting from Aubrey to Grace. He rightly interpreted the lovers' silence, and needed not the deepened rose in Grace's cheek nor Aubrey's downcast eyes to reveal the truth.

"Go, lass, leave us," said Stuart not ungently. "I would talk with Captain Aubrey alone."

"O father," she began with a gesture of entreaty, then turned and disappeared into the woods behind the breastwork.

Aubrey began falteringly to speak of his love for Grace. He seemed more than ever the boy as he stood there, hesitating, eager yet embarrassed, all his youthful assurance fallen from him. And Alan Stuart, stern and masterful, seemed more than ever the Highland chief of old, who wielded the power of life and death over his vassals.

"Your daughter has told me, Major Stuart, that she loves me, and I ask your permission to marry her. I know it is soon to speak of this, that I should, perhaps, have waited longer, but, as you know, the length of my sojourn here is uncertain, and I could not go away leaving my love unspoken."

Alan Stuart remained silent, looking darkly at Au-

brey. When he finally spoke his voice was full of a cold passion, all the more ominous for its repression.

"Are you mad, sir, that you ask to marry my daughter? Did I not give you warning enough that night by the fire that you should dare to affront me thus? Let her wed with an Englishman?—Never, a thousand times, never!"

"But this is absurd, Major Stuart"—protested Aubrey. "Your daughter is English as well as Scotch, and I am of Highland blood, as I have told you."

"Not another word," burst out Stuart yet more fiercely. "It is worse than vain for you to attempt to persuade me! There are a thousand other reasons that would forever prevent a marriage between you: Grace is a mere child; you and she have had scarce three weeks' acquaintance, and neither one of you is suited to the other. Surely all this is enough to warrant my refusal. No, no"—as Aubrey made a gesture of remonstrance,—"it is useless for you to seek to change me. My answer is final!"

Throughout this speech Aubrey, vainly attempting to stem the flood of argument, was conscious of a deepening conviction that none of the reasons Stuart had given had been the real reason. Behind them all something lay hidden. What was it? He felt a burning resentment kindle in his heart against this man, a resentment welded of suspicion and boyish rage. And it was with angrily averted eyes that he turned and left Stuart standing beneath the oak.

But if in Aubrey's soul hate and suspicion smouldered, in Alan Stuart's burned a still more bitter flame! And after Aubrey had gone he bowed his head upon

his hands, and leaned, shuddering, against the oak. "Marjory Campbell! Marjory Campbell! '*My brother Donald* has been murdered!' It has followed me even here,—here in this wilderness where I had thought to find peace. O God, is there no place on earth where it will cease to haunt me!"

Meantime Grace, her heart throbbing with alternating hopes and fears, strayed listlessly along forest paths, fair with the mystery of April deepening into May. She knew nothing of the meaning of love. She only knew how strangely sweet was the touch of Aubrey's hand on hers, and the look in his eyes when they rested upon hers,—a power that held and drew her, mysterious and strong. Thus musing, she wandered on into the forest, stooping now and then to pluck a violet, blue and fragrant, sister to those that Aubrey had set in her gleaming hair, little dreaming of the fate that was coming to meet her along those woodland aisles.

That morning there had arrived at Fort St. Frédéric a barge bearing two French noblemen, one of them a cousin to the King of France. That handsome daredevil, Rupert de Valois, having drained to the dregs the wine of the Old World pleasures, had come hither to tempt his surfeited taste with that of the New. Having completed a tour of the outworks, he and his companion were returning to St. Frédéric a little in advance of their escort, when the eye of Marseille d'Ardenne was caught by the flutter of a deerskin dress in the woods ahead.

"An Indian maiden, doubtless," he observed to the Duc de Valois, who retorted, laughing languidly,

"Never talk, my dear Marseille, of being backward with the sex; 'tis ever your eye that first spies a woman. Eh bien, let's go talk to her,—even a deerskin petticoat is better than none in this forsaken place."

Marseille d'Ardenne frowned slightly, but he answered, "Have your way, mon ami. But, tiens, we shall need to haste or those light Algonquin feet of hers will out-trip us."

Accordingly the two hurried on, laughing, gallant figures in their vivid white uniforms, till, reaching a little clearing, the Duke of Ardenne, who had outsped his companion, came upon the object of their pursuit standing beneath a slender birch, and, with a start of surprise, found himself facing the most beautiful white girl he had ever seen.

Marseille d'Ardenne, bowing low, felt his wonder increase, for though she stood quite motionless, looking at him with wide eyes, there was in them neither alarm nor embarrassment.

A moment later they were joined by the Duc de Valois, whose surprise equalled his companion's, but whose admiration did not content itself with a bow.

"Ye gods, we left the court of France to find a greater beauty in the wilderness. Ma foi, pretty one, not so coy,—just a kiss or two to console us for long abstinence."

Laughing audaciously he advanced toward the girl, who, still more in surprise than alarm, drew away from him.

Marseille d'Ardenne slipped quickly between them.

"Have a care, Rupert," he exclaimed, frowning

angrily, "this is no place for your Parisian gallantries."

"Upon my soul, d'Ardenne, you take too much upon yourself!" retorted de Valois fiercely, flinging off the restraining hand upon his arm. "What affair is it of yours if I like the taste of sweet lips now and then!"

The two young noblemen faced each other defiantly, hands clenched, instantly transformed into rivals. The innocent cause of it all stood motionless, poised for flight like a dryad about to vanish into the sheltering tree.

But a figure had approached, unseen by the disputants,—a figure which drew noiselessly nearer, and now halted within touch. Flying Swallow stood with folded arms, without menace of word or gesture, yet at sight of him de Valois drew back suddenly, while Grace, with a little cry, ran to the Indian and caught his hand. Flying Swallow, with unerring instinct, ignored d'Ardenne, to fix on Rupert de Valois a look of calm defiance, the deadlier because so passionless,—symbol of the undying enmity that should exist between the nobleman and the savage—the suave courtier and the primeval man. An ominous silence followed this mute challenge of the forest. Then the Duc de Valois, recovering his self-possession, started forward, his hand upon his sword, muttering angry curses. But d'Ardenne again seized his arm, whispering, "Mon Dieu, mon ami, restrain yourself, unless you wish a knife-thrust in the heart! Are you mad enough to draw down on us an Indian attack? Let the girl go in peace!"

Still without a word Flying Swallow turned majestically and with Grace by his side disappeared into the green haze of the forest.

Muttering futile curses upon what he called his companion's "coward caution" Rupert de Valois strode angrily toward the fort. He was musing fiercely on his discomfiture, and what means he should take to avenge it, when the figure of a girl in the saucy Normandy dress came tripping across his path; and his sullen frown vanished as he looked into the dark coquettish eyes of Dorette. Smiling, he tilted back the pretty chin, and imprinted a kiss on the scarlet pouting lips. This time he met with no resistance, for Dorette was not at all averse to being kissed by a fine gentleman. She made but a pretence of coyness as she slipped from his encircling arm.

"La, m'sieur! how you frightened me! But I will say that you are handsome, m'sieur, handsomer even than the young English captain that Mam'selle Grace is so mightily taken with that she'll not so much as glance at any other man."

A light dawned upon de Valois. "Look you, ma belle, is your 'Mam'selle Grace' a maid clad in deerskin, with hair like sunbeams and with the beauty of a queen?"

Dorette assented with a mischievous pout. "But, Holy Virgin, m'sieur, 'tis no use for you to woo her. She is head over ears in love, as I said, with le Capitaine Aubrey."

"And who the devil is this Aubrey?" de Valois demanded.

"An English prisoner, M'sieur le Duc, who was

brought here from Lac St. Sacrement some three weeks since to await exchange."

"A prisoner, said you? Eh, bien, since the air of St. Frédéric agrees so well with him, 'twould be a great pity to deprive him of it so soon. There are dungeons beneath the fort where his love may, perchance, have time to cool. But, look you, pretty one, not a word of this lest some breath of it reach our fine captain.

"Ah, no, m'sieur, not a whisper, trust me, and so—adieu."

And blowing him a kiss from her finger-tips Dorette fluttered away up the slope.

Dorette had the pretty mischief and seeming harmlessness of a kitten, but it was wisdom to beware of that same pretty mischief which hid sharp claws under velvet sheathing, and was prone to scratch.

Arrived, scarlet-cheeked and panting, at the cabin, she encountered Flying Swallow at the door, and began storming volubly at him in her pretty French. Dorette had always cherished an intense dislike of Flying Swallow, doubtless due to Grace's attachment to the Abnaki and her own desire to be without a rival in her mistress's regard.

"Always at my heels, you skulking creature," she would cry. "Because you saved my mistress's life years ago, as even a dog could have done, one must put up with you eternally, I suppose! The only good deed you ever did, I dare swear!"

And Flying Swallow would receive her taunts with a cold impassive scorn, a thousand times more irritating than any retort in kind.

On the present occasion Dorette, sweeping contemptuously past him into the cabin, found Grace seated at the spinning-wheel, not far advanced in her task, for she sat with idle hands, absorbed in troubled musing.

Dorette, entering, with a gay whirl of skirts, sank down upon the floor beside her mistress, and caught the straying hands in hers. She hesitated a little, apparently between a desire to impart information and a terror of the consequences, then, in a hurried whisper:

"Oh, Mam'selle Grace, such news as I have! Le Duc de Valois—he, with the fine uniform and the jewelled star—made a threat to—to"—here Dorette paused to glance over her shoulder—"to put le Capitaine Aubrey in the dungeon of St. Frédéric, and all because of your so great beauty, mam'selle, and because he wills not that you should wed le capitaine. Voilà! it is told!—But, truly, mam'selle, perhaps it were best to let things be. If you wed the Duke, you will be a Duchess, and wear pearls in your hair, and dance with King Louis himself at Versailles."

And with this bit of worldly wisdom she sprang up, laughing, gay visions of Paris beginning to dance before her eyes.

Grace, very pale, had risen, gazing, incredulous, at Dorette; then, without a word, she ran from the house.

Meantime Philip Aubrey, having taken sullen leave of Alan Stuart, began to retrace his steps toward the cabin on the bay. As he went he held angry council with himself. He would find a way to win Grace even against her father's consent, he told himself, setting his teeth doggedly. It would be difficult, he was forced to admit, knowing her obedience to her father in every

slightest particular. But one thing he vowed with passion; he would never leave this beautiful girl in the wilderness to be wed by some swashbuckling Frenchman or roving savage.

Suddenly he was seized by the idea that by some superhuman effort he might yet induce Alan Stuart to consent to their betrothal. An overpowering confidence in himself—such as is apt to take possession of the mind at times—came upon him. Swayed by this impulse he turned and hurried back toward the place where he had left Alan Stuart standing beneath the trysting-oak.

It was like quenching water on the flame of his confidence to find the Scotsman gone. Despondently he seated himself beneath the oak, his new-spun hope dissolved as suddenly as it had taken form.

The rustle of hurrying feet broke in upon his brooding; he sprang up to see Grace running toward him, wide-eyed and trembling. Breathlessly, she told him of her meeting with Rupert de Valois and of the threat which had followed it.

"Philip, Philip, you must go at once. You must flee through the wilderness to Fort Edward. Your parole will not protect you. I dare not trust Montcalm's power against so great an influence.—That man, they say, is cousin to the King. You must go now. O God! at any moment a guard may be sent to seize you!"

And she clung to him, pale with a fear she had never known before.

"How dare they break faith with me thus!—with me—a prisoner on parole!" cried Philip angrily. "Do

they call this consistent with their boasted honour? Do not think these French can hold Carillon and St. Frédéric against the army England sends to capture them. A few months at most and the men who threaten me will themselves be prisoners. Your father has refused me his consent. But before I go I must have your answer. Will you promise to become my wife as soon as I can return to claim you?"

He put his arm about her and drew her toward him. "Just one kiss, sweetheart," he pleaded, raising her face to his; but she gently repulsed him.

"No, no," she protested. "I cannot kiss you till my father consents, a kiss is sacred like a promise. But I will wait for you till you can return to win his favour. And then——" she ended, blushing.

Philip flushed with annoyance. "You little Puritan!" he cried. "You are lovely enough and coy enough to drive a man distracted. But I will win you, Grace, in spite of all. I pledge my faith to you, sweetheart."

"And I to you, Philip," she answered, a look of solemnity shadowing the lovely child-face. "Take this oak-leaf"—plucking it from the tree beneath which they stood; "it is the symbol of the Stuarts. Keep it as a token of my troth. I will win my father's consent if I can."

Silently he took the leafy token, and hid it in his coat, and silently he bent and kissed her hands. A moment more and the great earthworks rose between them, shutting him from sight.

V

REVELATION

SUMMER brooded over the wilderness, tremulous with heat. The still blue days went by like dreams, without murmur of wave or stir of leaf. In the green shadow of the forest the lake lay like a sleeping child, unmindful of the storms that should ruffle its bosom in the days to come.

It was on one of these dream-days that Grace, brooding, chin in hand, a lovely woodland sphinx on the shore at Carillon, felt, rather than heard, a step behind her, and turning, beheld Red Plume, the Abnaki. Any other than she might well have started at sight of his painted face and barbaric figure, but, whatever his crimes, the Abnaki had never failed in devotion to those whom a strange Scottish custom had made his kin.

Beautiful Floating Cloud, his murdered daughter, had been her friend for whom, even yet, she had not ceased to mourn; and to Flying Swallow, his son, she owed her life. For her, this man, however sinister his purpose, had no terror.

He stood gazing down at her with a look of mysterious meaning for a full minute before he spoke.

"Les Anglais have come to An-di-a-ta-roc-te," (Lake George) the words were whispered almost in her ear. "They have spread their tents by the fort

of the dead. Red Plume looked through the boughs and saw them. White Dawn loves the men of the blood-red coats better than those of the coats like snowbirds, is it not so? She would like to see the white coats stained red?"

Grace had risen, and now she laid her hand on his bare shoulder, gazing eagerly into his grim face.

"Ah, Red Plume," she said earnestly, "it is true I love the red coats better than the white. But for all that, I would not see war and bloodshed. It is peace for which I pray——" She paused with a little sigh. "But have you told my father of this news?"

"The Mountain Oak tarries yet within the fort," Red Plume answered, and, turning, swept his hand toward Carillon. Instinctively Grace turned also, and the two stood gazing at the fort on the stern ridge above them, whence the flag of the golden lilies flaunted proudly in the hot sunshine. In the hearts of both—in the heart of the girl and the heart of the savage—throbbed one unuttered wish: to see that proud flag torn forever from its place. But with Grace the wish was born of pure devotion, not only to her lover, but to her mother's people; with Red Plume it was the offspring of an undying vengeance.

When the tall figure of the Algonquin had disappeared, Grace resumed her seat upon the boulder. The news that the English army had reached Lake George seemed but an echo from her own heart. The thought of Philip had been with her all the day—when was not the thought of him with her? During the two months which had elapsed since their parting she had vainly striven to alter her father's decision. Some inexorable

purpose held him fixed as adamant. She had almost lost faith in her power to win him, but she comforted herself with the hope that Philip's persuasions would yet prevail. And Philip was coming to her; each day would bring him nearer. And at that thought her breath quickened and her eyes shone.

But presently a shadow crossed her face, and she glanced almost apprehensively over her shoulder. For two months Rupert de Valois had haunted her path,—a sinister shape—however seemingly gay and debonair. She no more fathomed his purpose than the child fathoms the destructiveness of the tempest from which it instinctively flees, but her dread of him was no less intense because of its vagueness. She shivered at the possibility that Philip might again fall into his power. The shadow of war had cast its gloom across her childhood, and lain ominous upon her girlhood, and now it threatened to darken her young womanhood.

When, an hour later, Alan Stuart descended the steep path from the fort she told him the Indian's tidings with a strange thrill in her voice. He watched her narrowly, but he made no comment, and it was not till they were alone that evening in the cabin at St. Frédéric that he returned to the subject.

"So the English are encamped at St. Sacrement with Ticonderoga for their destination? 'Tis not unexpected tidings, lass. Well, methinks, they will return more swiftly than they come, if they attempt to take Carillon by storm. Montcalm will build entrenchments before which these proud English—aye, and those traitor-Scots who fight for England—will go down in blood!"

Grace drew a quick breath of horror. "O father, father, how can you speak thus exultingly! There are brave men in that army, noble men like Lord Howe whom Captain Aubrey holds in such high regard. Are they not closer kin to us than these French? Oh, I know France aided us to flee from Scotland, but have you not served her faithfully all these years? Is not that enough to clear the debt? O father, father, do not draw your sword against your countrymen! Be merciful and warn them of this danger." Appeal was in her voice and gesture.

He turned upon her angrily. "My countrymen! The English! Are you mad? Aliens,—enemies,—have they ever been to me! They hunted me, outlawed me, would, God permitting, have taken my life! And now you would have me stand by passive, and lift no hand against them! Nay more, even warn them of their peril. You are mad, girl, mad even to think it!"

"They are my mother's people—they are my people," she said wistfully.

"Have you forgotten your Scottish blood so utterly?" he demanded fiercely. "I would that you were either English wholly or Scottish wholly. You, a Highland girl, would aid the conqueror of your people. England murdered Scotland at Culloden. There are men in that army yonder who fought at Culloden. Remembering this, are you yet willed to warn them?"

He spoke sternly, his habitual tenderness toward her submerged by the flood-tide of bitterly cherished patriotism. She hesitated and her face overshadowed. It was evident that she was greatly moved.

"You make it very hard for me, father," she said

plaintively. "Perhaps there may be men in that army who, like Wolfe, were merciful and noble at Culloden. Shall they be sacrificed because of the others? If ten righteous men could have saved Sodom, should not the army yonder be warned for the sake of one righteous man within its ranks? Surely all the English are not merciless—Captain Aubrey——"

He interrupted her sharply. "I am weary of this Aubrey. His name is too often upon your lips. No wonder that I rued the day when he came hither to disturb our peace. I forbid you to speak of him henceforth. Did you mis-read your Bible? There were not ten righteous men to be found in Sodom, and the same is true of the English army. Murderers are they; one and all!"

"Father, what right have you to speak thus harshly? —How know you that Philip Aubrey is not upright?— You have forbidden me to speak his name. Well, I will speak this once of him, and never again.—Why do you hate him so? You have said it was because he was English! Yet he has as much Scottish blood as I.—What true right have you to hold us thus apart?——"

"Are you so stubborn then?" he cried fiercely. "Mad you are and thrice mad.—Well, then, know the truth, if you must—a bitter secret it will be to you as it has been to me these many years.—I killed a man in Scotland sixteen years ago—a man named Donald Campbell—he had a sister Marjory—and she was Philip Aubrey's mother!"

"O father! father!" the words were a cry of horror that seemed to fill the silence that followed.

"Yes, I killed him," he spoke slowly as if in a trance of dread. "We had long been enemies, and one day we met alone in a wild glen, beside a mountain torrent. O God! to this day they call it 'The river of the red stain!' Angry words passed between us, and then—I struck—and struck to kill! And, so I left him lying there in the heather, and fled—for my life. And at last, exhausted and torn, I came to Inverawe, the home of Duncan Campbell, and of him,—the avenger of blood being close at my heels,—I was fain to ask refuge. And he, own cousin to Donald Campbell, not knowing the name of him I had slain, swore on his dirk to protect me, gave me shelter from my pursuers, and afterward hid me in a cave on Ben Cruachan, whence I escaped beyond reach of capture.

"But never, in all the years that passed ere I left Scotland, never once, though far from the country of the Campbells, did I draw a breath without dread of vengeance. Fleeing from Scotland I thought to cast that fear away forever, to lose it in the waste of seas or in the pathless wilderness. But, O God! it followed me! followed me! Everywhere, alike in sea and forest, I saw the face of Donald Campbell, as I last had seen it—lying blood-stained in the heather; and beside it I saw the face of his kinsman, Inverawe, not as it had looked the night he gave me shelter, but as it would look when we met again, dreadful, distorted by the lust of vengeance.

"That fear drove me from place to place in this New World, never finding rest, ever fleeing, a murderer, from the avenger of blood. The shadow has lain lighter here at St. Frédéric, but it has never left

me. I thought it but a haunted fancy that made me see the features of the dead in the face of Philip Aubrey! Do you wonder now that I would not have you wed him! O God! the shadow of destiny—it has darkened my path for years,—it has darkened the paths of all with whom I have had to do! It has rested like a fate upon my life. Henceforth it will rest on yours! I am haunted, haunted, by the shadow of destiny!"

He bowed his head upon his hands, and his strong frame shook convulsively.

The hearth-fire illumined the two figures: Alan Stuart, bowed with guilt and vengeance-haunted; and the girl, pale and piteous-eyed, her fair, childlike face already shadowed by her father's sin.

At last, moving to where he still sat with covered head, she touched him gently, speaking slowly and with an effort, as he had done.

"Father, if you refuse to warn the army, then must I. If it was right before, it is a thousand times more urgent now!— O father, let me go, to atone for what you did to Philip Aubrey, and to God!"

But he sprang to his feet, facing her with blazing eyes and lifted hand, transformed in an instant from the guilty outcast to the avenging spirit.

"Never! Never! My hatred is a righteous hatred! No sin of mine can alter that! By my sword shall Scotland be avenged upon her enemies!"

She laid both hands upon her breast, and looked at him with eyes of calm determination.

"Father, leave judgment unto God. My heart tells me I must go!"

VI

"THE SOUL OF ABERCROMBIE'S HOST"

GRACE sat up in bed listening. A journey lay before her, difficult and dangerous. It was already midnight and she must be well upon her way by dawn. She was about to disobey her father. In words she could never forget, he had refused to do her bidding and, believing her at last persuaded, had never dreamed that she would herself undertake the mission. She had chosen to disobey him. And it was bitterly hard for her, for though conscience pointed her the way, love upbraided her. Then, too, she realized with fearful intensity that she was taking her life in her hands. By the light of a dying fire her eyes wandered with wistful yearning over each familiar object in the room, for the thought lay heavy on her heart that she might be looking upon them for the last time.

Yet an impulse too mighty to resist drove her forward. Philip Aubrey was undoubtedly a strong motive, but a man whom she had never seen was as powerful! Knowing of Lord Howe's presence in that army she would have gone had she never dreamed of Aubrey's existence.

Moving with trembling caution she slipped out of bed and began to dress hastily, glancing apprehensively at the bed in the opposite corner, for Dorette shared

with her the little two-room cabin. She stood for a moment looking toward the door beyond which her father lay sleeping, and her lips moved in an unuttered prayer. She chanced to touch the crucifix at her neck and the contact gave her courage. Having adjusted the pistol at her belt and the powder-horn about her shoulders, she crossed to the outer door, noiselessly drew back the bars, and stole out into the midsummer night.

There was no moon, but the stars gave light enough to enable her to find the familiar path to the eastern shore, and she moved with the noiseless speed of some wild creature of the woods. She had lived too long among the children of the forest not to have learned their ways of silence and secrecy. Swiftly she loosed the canoe from its mooring, placed in it a musket and a haversack containing food, sprang in, and with a single dexterous stroke pushed out into the lake.

The little settlement behind her lay wrapped in unbroken shadow. Not a light, not a sound, revealed the presence of man in the heart of the wilderness. And now, as with beating heart, she searched the dim expanse of water and the blurred line of shore for sound or movement, her mind, untrammelled by the senses, began to rehearse the events which had followed the divulgence of her father's secret. The horror of it overwhelmed her; the shadow that it cast upon her life seemed irrevocable. If she ever reached Philip Aubrey through this wilderness of lake and forest how could she ever find courage to tell him of this thing which had come between them? And yet through it all a passion of pity for her father welled up beneath the

horror and overflowed and mingled with it till the two were inseparably one.

But now her mind reverted to her meeting with Rupert de Valois the day before. Despite her dread of him she had looked him full in the face and flung her challenge at him fairly.

"Monsieur le Duc, beware. When you broke faith with Captain Aubrey, you broke, too, every tie that held me to your people. If any power of mine can warn the English, they shall not go unwarned."

And with proudly lifted head she had turned and left him.

From this scene her thoughts drifted to the immediate difficulties before her. Not only were the French outposts to be dreaded; but other and natural obstacles:—foremost among them the distance she would be obliged to carry her canoe. She could not be sure how long it would take her to reach St. Sacrement. Flying Swallow, she remembered, on one of his frequent hunting trips, had made the journey in a day, but he had not been hampered by a woman's dress, and he had, moreover, gone by the most direct route. Oh, if she but had the strength and guidance of Flying Swallow to help her in this strait! Yet her one fear had been lest he should discover her purpose and insist upon accompanying her. For such an act would inevitably involve him in serious trouble with the French authorities, might, perhaps, threaten his life itself. Had Flying Swallow spent the night at the cabin—which was frequently the case—she could never have escaped undetected, as she well knew. But he had gone that evening to his father's wigwam farther down the bay.

The possibility of sending Red Plume on this mission in her stead had occurred to her, but only for a moment, for to do so would be to risk bringing him into open conflict with the power of France—the disaster she had dreaded for his son.

While these thoughts surged through her mind, her eyes were ceaselessly vigilant and her hands as ceaselessly plied the paddle. When the night paled, and a rose-flush crept across the face of the sky, she paused and let the canoe drift, for she dared not proceed farther without careful deliberation. Two ways lay before her: defying the risk, she could follow the lake to Carillon in open day, and thence the outlet to the carrying-place; or she must make a wide détour to the east, crossing the country to Lake George many miles below Ticonderoga. The latter course would require a longer time, and would take her through an almost unbroken wilderness, but, after all, was it not the only feasible route? For otherwise she must encounter the French sentinels and she knew of no pretext which would enable her to pass them.

The decision made, she resumed her paddle, and sent the canoe plunging southward under a firm stroke. She would venture to go by water for a few miles more, but with every stroke bringing her nearer that grim sentinel, Fort Carillon, she must redouble her vigilance. So it was that her eyes strayed often from the line of shore to the loaded musket at her feet;—still oftener as the lake narrowed, and the green wall of forest drew so near that it almost shadowed the canoe.

Suddenly there was a stir in the leaves above her head. Grace, dropping her paddle, seized the musket,

but before she could fire, the branches parted and Flying Swallow appeared in the opening.

With a little cry, half-alarm, half-relief, she thrust the canoe ashore, and as he sprang down the bank, stood up, and stretched out her arms to him, crying in the Abnaki tongue, "Flying Swallow! my brother! you are welcome! But oh, why did you come?"

"Does my sister, White Dawn, ask that?" he answered, and though his impassive features did not change, his voice held reproach.

"But you must go back!" she cried, laying insistent hands upon his arm, "there is danger for you here. You must not come with me. France would never forgive!"

"If my sister goes, why should not I?"

She gave a restless little laugh. "It is different with me. I have counted the cost; and should it mean my life, still I would attempt it. But for you, Flying Swallow, it is otherwise. You are not bound to the English, as I am, by ties of blood and loyalty. Why should you risk your life upon this errand? I forbid you to go!"

"My sister has said," he replied, with the sententious utterance of the Indian. "Now will Flying Swallow speak. I go!"

And with the words he motioned Grace to resume her seat, and stepping in beside her, took up the extra paddle, and with a strong push sent the canoe adrift.

Taught by experience the uselessness of opposing him, the girl made no further protest, but caught up her own paddle, timing her stroke to his, till under this doubled impetus the canoe leaped ahead with a spark-

ling rush of water about the bow. Yet frequently her eyes would rest on Flying Swallow, and her face would shadow with fear of what his loyalty might cost.

After two days of wandering through a tangled wilderness, Flying Swallow pushed aside the heavy screen of boughs that hid the trail, and Grace in the dawn looked down upon Lac St. Sacrement, as the French had named it, clad in an eddying mist-robe that even as she looked dissolved and lifted to float away in snowy plumes of vapour.

Although they were well beyond the French outposts, Flying Swallow crept forward to reconnoitre, speedily returning to declare the prospect favourable. Accordingly, the canoe was launched, and they pushed out upon the limpid bosom of the lake. The mountains, veiled in mist and clad in impenetrable forests, loomed overhead like giants, and Grace could form little idea of their actual height. But presently the sun rose and the lake lay spread before them,—a silver targe embossed with the green of unnumbered islands, and set in a dark rim of mountains. The uplifted paddles were dripping with liquid diamonds, in which the sun made many a mimic rainbow. Grace, looking about her on the beauty of the scene, found it hard to believe that this lake had known only strife and bloodshed from its remotest history. And yet she knew the sublimely tragic story of Father Joques, the heroic Jesuit who, passing thither in 1646 as an envoy to the Iroquois, had named the lake St. Sacrement because he first beheld its beautiful waters on the feast of Corpus Christi. She remembered, too, how Sir William Johnson had in 1755 rechristened it Lake

George, "not only in honour of his Majesty, George II, but to ascertain his undoubted dominion here."

From the beauty around her, her thoughts wandered to the final scene with her father, already a bitter memory. It pained her to think that Flying Swallow, a man of an alien race, and bound to her by no ties of blood, should have rendered her the loyalty and devotion which her father had denied. As her hands mechanically plied the paddle, her mind was haunted by this one insistently bitter thought:—her father's failure to believe in her, and his fierce rejection of her last appeal.

So the hours wore on. And all that long midsummer day Grace and Flying Swallow knew that at any moment death might flash at them from a hidden musket lurking on shore or island.

It was the evening of the 4th of July—a day destined eighteen years later to be rendered forever memorable —when at sunset they rounded a point of land and saw before them the white tents of the English army dotting the plain whereon had stood a twelvemonth earlier the fated fort of William Henry. Grace's heart leaped in her throat at the sight, and she sat gazing before her with shining eyes. For years to come the scene dwelt in her memory: the blackened ruins of the fort, the sea of white tents, the scarlet flash of uniforms, the background of purple mountains and the golden clouds above them. With a little sigh she let the paddle fall. The goal had been reached at last! And Philip was near!

In response to the hail of the sentry Flying Swallow

guided the canoe ashore, and Grace, springing out, turned eagerly to a passing officer.

"Take me at once to the English commander."

The soldier regarded wonderingly her beauty and disarray, then he led the way up the beach and between the rows of tents, pausing finally before one larger than the others, in front of which stood a scarlet-uniformed group of officers. As Grace approached, the group dissolved, and turned to regard her in wonder. With unerring intuition she singled out one officer from the rest: a young man of perhaps thirty-three, tall and of commanding presence. Then she saw Philip Aubrey standing beside him, and as the thought of their last meeting rushed upon her, she blushed with memory of that kiss denied.

But presently her eyes left Aubrey's to meet those of the man beside him, and these two gazed at each other as if impelled by a mutual magnetism. The girl did not even notice that, in contrast to his companions, he wore the coat of a common soldier; it was the man that drew her: the face serene and fearless, bearing the stamp of the leader; the clear, kindly blue eyes, the mouth at once firm and gentle; the air of nobility that seemed to envelop him. And he, on his part, marvelled at this jewel in so rude a setting; at the Titian golden of her dishevelled hair, at the unshadowed sweetness of the eyes,—beautiful eyes, giving back like a flawless mirror the unshadowed soul;—at that face, which for all its woman's beauty was still a child's for innocence and trust.

This girl in deerskin swept him as graceful a courtesy as ever he had seen at court, while he kissed as

reverently the pretty ringless hand she gave him as ever he had kissed the jewelled fingers of a duchess.

"Lord Howe, for you, as the commander of this army, I have news of the utmost importance."

A gentle smile crossed his face. "Madam, I am not the leader of the army; I am only second in command. General Abercrombie is yonder."

"No, no," she insisted, "it is to you, Lord Howe, and to you alone, that I will speak. For the sake of England I have come from Fort St. Frédéric to warn the army of Montcalm's entrenchments at Carillon! You must besiege the fort, my lord, not attack!"

Her face glowed, her voice rang like a bugle; the gentle dryad was transformed into a very goddess of Bellona.

Lord Howe regarded her with grave attention. He was about to speak when a heavily built man of fifty, wearing a full-dress uniform, approached.

"What is all this, my lord?" he demanded impatiently; then, turning curtly to Grace: "Who are you, girl, and whence came you?"

She faced him proudly. "I am Grace Stuart, the daughter of Major Alan Stuart of Fort St. Frédéric, and I bear tidings of the French. They are building entrenchments at Carillon that will withstand the strongest army. I have told Lord Howe that he must take the fort by siege."

"And you believe all this, my lord?" demanded Abercrombie angrily. "I tell you this whole story is a deliberate falsehood. This girl is a mere tool of Montcalm's sent here to deceive us. I might know these young fools would be tricked by a pair of pretty

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eyes,"—with a scornful wave of the hand toward the loitering circle,—"but I had thought better of your lordship."

A flush overspread Lord Howe's fine features, but he answered with unruffled courtesy.

"General, you are mistaken. If evidence of truth is needed, Miss Stuart bears it in her face."

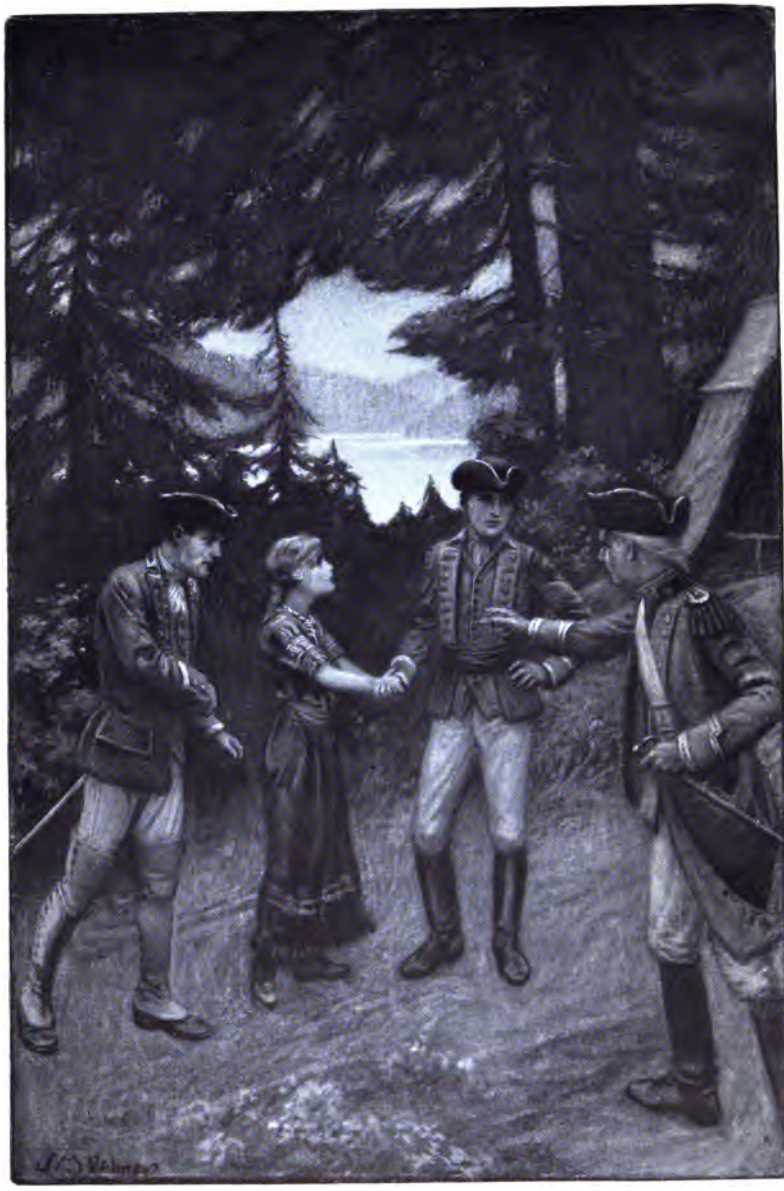
Abercrombie reddened with rage. "Good heavens, so even you are infected too! It seems I am the only sane man present. I repeat again what I have said: there is not a shred of truth in this story. This girl is a French spy, and I shall arrest her as such!"

There followed a breathless pause. Flying Swallow, on the outskirts of the group, crouched like a panther about to spring. Aubrey's hand sought his sword-hilt. Looks of indignation ran from face to face. Only Lord Howe preserved an outward calm; he seemed to straighten and his face grew stern. Then, with a little gasp, Grace caught his hand in both of hers, and her eyes looked beseechingly into his.

"Lord Howe, I am no spy! I know that you believe in me! O, my lord, promise to protect me!"

A look of deep solemnity crossed his face, and as he spoke, his words held more than their mere surface meaning. To the girl's heart they carried a strange thrill.

"Yes, I promise."



"Lord Howe, I am no spy! . . . O my lord, promise to protect me!"

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VII

"A GEM OF PUREST RAY"

A SOLEMN silence followed on the words like the silence that follows prayer. Then, with a little sob of gratitude, the girl caught his hand to her lips and kissed it, while Abercrombie, purple-faced with rage, turned and stalked off in high dudgeon.

Lord Howe was conscious of a strong desire to shield this lovely child from the gaze of the soldiery who were crowding around them.

"Madam," he said with his gentle smile, "may I escort you to my tent where you may better tell me of these French plans?"

As he spoke he offered her his arm, and leading her to a large tent near by, held back the curtain for her to enter.

Two candles lit the rudely furnished interior, for despite the lingering midsummer twilight it was dark within. Lord Howe drew forward a couple of logs which, covered with bear-skins, served as seats.

"Now, madam," he repeated, "will you not tell me all the story? What first determined you to undertake this perilous journey for England's sake?"

The candlelight illumined his handsome, resolute face, softened now to a woman's gentleness, as he regarded the girl in her deerskin gown, her fair face

bearing the marks of weariness and dread. He was deeply moved by the thought of this lovely delicate woman braving the perils of the wilderness with no companion but a savage. He noticed the pistol in her belt and the powder-horn about her shoulders with a chivalrous pity, thinking how utterly they contrasted with her feminine grace and refinement. This beautiful girl, destined by nature for a sheltered life, had been exposed by a cruel destiny to all the dangers and privations of the roughest soldier.

With a feverish eagerness she recounted her journey, and the motives which had impelled her to undertake it.

"Captain Aubrey, when a prisoner at Fort St. Frédéric, told me of you, Lord Howe, described you to me as his dearest friend. And so it was I recognized you. I knew there could be but one man of so noble a bearing."

From other lips the words would have seemed flattery; from hers they rang with a child's sincerity. And with a grave bow Lord Howe acknowledged them, deeply touched by the greatest compliment that had yet been paid him.

"And now," he said, after a pause, "are you too weary to describe to me these French fortifications?"

"Too weary? Oh, no, no. And if I were it would not matter when England's honour is at stake!"

She sprang up like a lioness. Her eyes flamed, her bosom heaved; the bell-tones of her voice became a trumpet. On the table between them a great map lay outspread. The girl fairly snatched it, with what, in so gentle a creature, seemed fury. Lord Howe had risen also, and the two bent together over the map, the girl's

eager finger tracing each important route, or pausing on each strategic point, while with a characteristically naïve movement she repeatedly tossed back over her shoulder the heavy braid of her obtrusive hair.

Her deep hostility to the French she did not conceal; it was betrayed in the tones of her voice, and in the passionate eagerness with which she described every plan and movement of theirs, of which she had gained possession. Lord Howe, trained soldier that he was, stood amazed at her knowledge. This girl, a mere child, not yet twenty, possessed the military instinct of a seasoned veteran. And yet with all her military instinct she was so intensely and tenderly feminine. The fiery Highland blood of many a Stuart was tempered by her womanhood, but the flame of it was not quenched.

"And so you must besiege, my lord, as I have said —believe me, I implore you. If you surround Montcalm and cut off any hope of his reinforcement, Carillon will be yours! But to attack,—O God! to attack will mean the bravest lives poured out for naught!"

She stretched out her hands to him with a gesture of entreaty as if she pleaded both for him and for the army. He stood with folded arms, regarding her with a deep and reverent admiration in which some other feeling seemed to mingle.

"Miss Stuart, if my life is granted me, I give you my solemn promise that I will fulfil your desire. And never, never shall I forget the inestimable service you have rendered me! It is a debt I can never repay!"

She made a little deprecating gesture. "Ah, my

lord, say not so! I am repaid enough by your belief in me and by the hope that through me the army may be saved."

An hour later when the golden afterglow had faded from the sky and the hush of night was falling over the great camp, Lord Howe and Grace walked together beside the lake. It was a moonless evening, but the stars shone in multitudes; the waveless lake was strewn with their mirrored gold as if an angel's hand had tossed down a myriad of jewels. As they stood side by side Lord Howe felt the heavy braid of her hair brush his sleeve like an unconscious caress.

"My hair is a great trouble to me," she remarked with childlike naïveté, "I shall have to cut it off as you did yours," glancing at Lord Howe's abundant brown hair which, in contrast to the fashion, was worn short.

"It would be a pity to do that," said Lord Howe gently as to a child. "It is such beautiful hair."

"That is what my father thinks," she confided, "but I would much rather have black, or brown like yours, or like—" she hesitated—"like Captain Aubrey's," she finished bravely.

Lord Howe sighed. "The woman stirring in the child," he thought.

In simple words she told the story of her life, save only that which touched upon her father's secret.

A thrill, such as in all his years at court he had never felt, ran through him as he listened to her—this beautiful child of the virgin wilderness of which she seemed the perfect symbol—the offspring of the Old World, and yet the flower of the New.

The words of Gray's immortal Elegy came irresistibly to his mind:

> "Full many a gem of purest ray serene
> The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
> Full many a flow'r is born to blush unseen,
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Here was "the gem of purest ray"; the "flow'r born to blush unseen." He could not realize that less than two hours before he had not even dreamed of her existence. Like some rare pearl from the ocean had this beautiful girl been cast up from the vast green wilderness and flung by the waves of circumstance at his very feet. His love—for love he already felt it to be—might be a thing new-born, but it was clothed with the strength and tenderness of a lifetime.

Here was the woman formed by Fate for him to wed. His breath quickened, and again a thrill ran through him. Would he stand with her some day, not in this wilderness beneath the stars, encircled by a camp of war, but under peaceful skies in that green island empire of the world? There flashed before his eyes the vision of a figure in bridal white, with Titian hair wound above a girlish brow, and sweet unshadowed eyes meeting his in perfect trust before a marriage altar. He caught the gold gleam of her hair beneath the pearls of her coronet, and saw her move, a radiant figure, along the ancient halls of a Nottingham castle. "My Lady Howe!"

But suddenly a shadow fell on this bright picture—the shadow of a portent which had lain dark upon his soul for many a day, and now cast its gloom directly on

his path!—Death in the heart of this wilderness—a soldier's death! . . . Despite himself a shudder ran through him, displacing the ecstasy. He shook it off with an effort. What folly to harbour such a fear! Life was before him, vigorous, full-pulsed life. Life, and perhaps love. . . .

The man who thus dreamed by the lakeside was the greatest Englishman who ever visited colonial America. A grandson of King George I, descended from one of the noblest families in England, Lord Howe united in his character the qualities of a statesman and a soldier: calmness and fervour, generosity and discernment, joined to a personality of powerful magnetism. He was the idol of the army. From drummer-boy to general they adored him. He "infused a noble ardour into every rank." The "dusty fragmentary mirrors" of the past give back in him a figure of rare charm.

William Pitt, Prime Minister of England, described him as a "character of ancient times; a complete model of military virtues"; General Wolfe, the victor of Quebec, said of him: "The noblest Englishman that has appeared in my time and the best soldier in the English army—that great man." Thomas Mante, historian of the campaign, called him "the soul of the army"; and Oliver Goldsmith wrote of him five years later: "He was the Scipio of his age and country, formed for all that was amiable in society and great in war." His was the genius that could have welded an empire out of warring factions. But, above all, he was a man of pure and honourable soul.

When Lord Howe and Grace turned toward the camp, the signs of preparation for departure were

everywhere manifest. Some of the tents had already been struck, and the soldiers who had occupied them were preparing to bivouac for the night. And everywhere was stir and movement, for at dawn the army was to embark for the voyage down the lake.

Lord Howe turned to Grace.

"Will you give me the honour of tendering you my tent for the night? It is a rude shelter, but I assure you it will be a safe one."

"How could it be otherwise?" she answered simply. "I accept the offer, and I thank you for it."

"And since you are a Highlander, I will order Major Duncan Campbell of the Black Watch to post a guard of his brave Highlanders outside.

"Duncan Campbell! Duncan Campbell!" The girl stood for a moment stricken mute, for the name beat like a bell upon her consciousness. With his quick perception his lordship marked the change in her face, and wondered.

In front of Lord Howe's tent in the red light of the torches Philip Aubrey stood waiting and humming as he waited "The Lass with the Delicate Air."

How gay and carefree, and assured he was, thought Lord Howe, and how utter a contrast to himself. He saw a crimson not of the torchlight on Grace's face, and his own overclouded. The shadow of his doom lay very dark just then. Even with that blush still crimsoning her cheek, Grace felt anew the charm of his personality, and was yet more strongly drawn to him as to a loyal protector and friend. Instinctively she turned toward him, and their eyes met in a look of mutual trust and comprehension.

Aubrey caught that look, and a feeling of inadequacy stole over him, utterly foreign to his usual careless confidence.

Lord Howe, with instant delicacy, bowed low. "Pardon me, Miss Stuart, while I consult with Major Campbell," and turning, disappeared between the rows of tents.

Aubrey gazed thoughtfully after his retreating figure, for perhaps the first time in his life at a loss what to say. But he quickly regained his self-possession.

"Grace, sweetheart," he cried eagerly, already the thoughtless, headlong boy again, "what a pretty little Amazon you are! And how brave you were to risk those perils for my sake! Naught can ever part us again!"

"O God!" she thought, "how little he knew of the shadow that had parted them years before either had dreamed of the other's existence!" Yet it seemed as if her lips refused to utter the dreadful secret.

Philip, unheeding her agitation, rushed on. "Marry me, sweetheart, marry me now without all this waiting to win your father's consent. He will yield and grant it gladly when once he finds you are my wife. Chaplain Stewart of the Black Watch can marry us this very hour."

But she shook her head and drew her hands from his. "No, Philip, it cannot be! I cannot deal him this great blow. What my conscience told me to be right, I did, even against my father's will, but what you ask of me would not be right."

"You have already disobeyed him, what matters one

thing more? That Scotch conscience of yours is strangely elastic at times," retorted Aubrey with boyish petulance.

"Do not reproach me, Philip," she pleaded. "I disobeyed him once from a sense of duty and to save many lives; but that does not justify me in the further disobedience of marrying you, Philip, against his wishes. But in spirit I am your betrothed till you can claim me in wedlock."

But Aubrey was like a petulant child to whom the toy he coveted has been denied. He continued to upbraid her angrily, while she, making no attempt at remonstrance, stood with quivering lips and troubled eyes. Her distress was at last relieved by the return of Lord Howe. He was accompanied by a tall, dark, stately man in Highland dress whom Grace, with a shuddering heart, divined to be Duncan Campbell of Inverawe.

VIII

THE VISION

LORD HOWE laid a hand on Aubrey's arm. "Come with me, lad, I have some plans to show you," and as Aubrey, with a somewhat sullen grace, complied, Alan Stuart's daughter and the man whom Alan Stuart most dreaded, were left alone in the torchlight. From the moment when they first rested upon her, Duncan Campbell's eyes had never left her face, his expression changing rapidly from interest to amazement. Now he took a step forward, searching her features with an incredulity fast giving place to conviction.

"My God! the child of Alan Stuart!—Yes, the same proud, fearless look, softened by a woman's beauty.—I would know those features anywhere—anywhere, in heaven or in hell. Child, have you heard his story?" Then, as she assented sadly, "But you know not mine!—O God! the shadow lies on me as well! Listen, and I will tell you!

"I owed my cousin Donald a heavy debt:—he had saved my life long before, and I had vowed to him by all that I held sacred to repay that debt when need required. One night, now more than sixteen years ago, I was sitting alone by my fire-side when the hound at my feet commenced to howl, and immediately thereafter I heard a loud knocking at the gate. Hastening

thither I found a stranger in torn and blood-stained clothing, breathless with haste.

"'I am Stuart of Appin,' he gasped, 'I have killed a man in combat, and the avengers are close behind me. Swear upon your dirk to befriend me!'

"Moved by pity I swore the oath, and hid him in a secret chamber in the castle. Scarcely had I done so, when there came a second knocking at the gate, and there I found a company of armed men. 'Your cousin Donald has been murdered. We are searching for the guilty man. Have you seen aught of him?'

"Then, indeed, was I troubled sorely, remembering the debt I owed my cousin; but also I remembered the oath that I had sworn by Ben Cruachan—the sacred oath of the Campbells of Inverawe. That oath I could not break. So I denied all knowledge of the murderer, and sent the men away. And at last, in deep trouble of soul, I lay down to sleep. But suddenly I woke in great horror to see the ghost of Donald, with blood-stained tartan and sternly reproachful mien, standing beside me. As I gazed at him trembling, he spoke: 'Inverawe! Inverawe! blood has been shed. Shield not the murderer!'

"Overwhelmed with fear, I went in the morning to Alan Stuart and told him I could shelter him no longer. But he reproached me bitterly, reminding me of the oath that I had sworn, till at last, in great perplexity, I guided him to a cave in Ben Cruachan and hid him there.

"But when that night I fell into a feverish slumber, the ghost of Donald appeared again at my bedside with hands outstretched in supplication. Again I heard

those words of dreadful warning: 'Inverawe! Inverawe! blood has been shed! Shield not the murderer!'

"At daybreak, I hastened, almost beside myself, to the cave in Ben Cruachan, but Stuart of Appin was gone.

"That night I did not dare to sleep, but sat, cold with dread, beside the fire. The clock was striking midnight when the hound, who bore me company, commenced to shiver violently and uttered a long mournful howl. Trembling, I raised my eyes. There, before me, enveloped in unearthly radiance, stood the blood-stained figure of my murdered kinsman. Yet now he made no plea for justice; and his face had less of sternness than of pity. Slowly and solemnly he spoke in words, which, while life lasts, will never cease to haunt me: 'Inverawe! Inverawe! Blood has been shed! Blood must atone for blood! Farewell, till we meet at *Ticonderoga.*'

"O merciful God! that fatal name has never ceased to echo in my ears!—*Ticonderoga!* It has a strange and foreign sound; it is unlike any name I ever heard. Oh, I have vainly searched through maps of Europe and of Asia and of Africa and of this wild New World to find that name of doom—yes, of doom! For wherever it be, there I shall die, even as he foretold! O God, some day *we shall meet at Ticonderoga!*"

He shuddered, and stood gazing out over the shadowy camp as if he sought to pierce the veil of that dread futurity. He seemed to have become unconscious of the girl's presence. When he spoke the fatal name "*Ticonderoga*" she had started violently, stifling the cry that leaped to her lips.

After a long silence she spoke. "Oh, it is dreadful! How you have suffered! But my father—his crime was very great, but he has suffered too. He lives in hourly dread of you. After all these years you do not still desire vengeance? You do not seek to kill him?"

Her voice shook piteously: she held out pleading hands.

"Seek to kill him? Why, 'tis he that hath killed me—I have died a thousand deaths since the night I gave him shelter. . . . Slow dying, aye, death by torture, and it needeth only the last sword-thrust—one thrust to still the heart and give me peace!"

She lifted her clasped hands to her bosom. "The shadow! the shadow!" she cried below her breath.

"Your father has no need to fear me," said Duncan Campbell after a painful pause. "If he looks on me as an avenger, still more do I regard him thus. He cannot shrink from me in greater dread than that in which I shrink from him. Go back to him, child, and tell him to live out his life in peace,—if to peace he may attain. For I shall never follow him to work him vengeance. That retribution I leave to God and destiny. My own doom has been long since decreed. But tell him also, child"—his stern face grew tender as he regarded her—"tell him that if aught on earth can atone for what he did, it is the courage and devotion of his daughter who risked her life to save her countrymen. A true Scot are you, my child, leal to the heart. My Highlanders will hold it a great honour to guard this tent. And now, child, you need rest; do not let this tale of mine disturb you. The shadow of it rests on me alone."

He took her hands and kissed them, and with his sombre tartans waving in the torchlight, was lost to sight among the tents. Grace, left alone, sank down upon a log nearby and struggled to suppress the rising tears. To weariness of body was added deep distress of mind, the effect of Aubrey's reproaches and the tragic utterances of Duncan Campbell. A voice speaking her name made her start with bewilderment. Lord Howe stood before her. Grace felt the relief of exchanging Aubrey's sullen petulance for his lordship's gentle courtesy. With instant discernment Lord Howe marked her distress, and divined a cause for it; and the pity he felt for her increased. His words of cheer soothed insensibly her aching heart.

"Now, Miss Stuart," he said presently, "I must keep you from your rest no longer; for you need it greatly, and by dawn the army will be in motion. I bid you good-night."

Grace entered the tent; as she did so, a figure in deerskin crept noiselessly from the shadows and stretched itself across the threshold. With a mind at peace, Grace curled herself up on Lord Howe's bearskin, wrapped herself in her tartan, and listening to the measured tread of the Highland sentries outside, fell asleep like a tired child.

Lord Howe and Aubrey shared a bearskin couch in the latter's tent. Aubrey fell at once into a careless sleep, but Lord Howe lay awake, reflecting.

The thought of asking Grace to marry him that he might protect her recurred to him insistently. His was a love so noble, so unselfish, that it was one with tenderness and pity, and less a passion than a yearning to

shield and comfort; an element more common in woman's love than man's.

With Aubrey, love was little more than the desire to pluck this loveliest blossom before another hand could gather it; to seize this purest pearl before another eye could covet it; to coin this rarest gold ere another stamp it with his image. With the one, love was bestowal, with the other, appropriation.

But Lord Howe's exquisite delicacy shrank from invading Aubrey's realm, from challenging Aubrey's right. Rivals they could not be—Lord Howe's generosity would never admit of it. No, it would be fair neither to Grace nor to Aubrey to interfere. O God! should his presentiment be true, what would any plan of his avail!

IX

"THE PATHS OF GLORY"

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of pow'r,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

"MIDSUMMER,—and the world a full-blown flower," so thought Philip Aubrey as he stood by the lakeside that morning of the 5th of July, 1758.

Over St. Sacrement the dawn was breaking; pearl merging to gold, and gold to the rarest rose, glorious banners streaming out above the purple ramparts of the mountains. But few eyes had leisure to watch their unfurling, for everywhere was the stir and hurry of departure. The great camp was dissolving; the white tents were vanishing like hoar-frost before the morning sun. Where that vagrant city had spread itself—a mushroom growth from the dark soil of war—were only those silent mounds of massacre, grass and trampled spaces, and the mountains that would never change for sound of pipe or bugle till they crumbled at the blast of the great judgment-trump.

Grace, standing beside Lord Howe and Philip on the shore, watched with eager eyes the scene of embarkation. Yet now and again her face would shadow over as quickly as the drift of clouds across a summer sky,

and she would glance at Lord Howe with troubled eyes. At such times the scene before her—with all its shifting colour—seemed as insubstantial as a dream.

Despite the fact that an army of sixteen thousand was in motion, there was no lack of order, no evidence of confusion. One man was the pivot around which all revolved. Abercrombie might be the virtual head of the army, but the brain which directed and controlled it was Lord Howe. To him came the officers of every regiment to receive their final orders. Not only was he a friend to every English subaltern, but he was on terms of intimacy with every colonial leader.

Among these was Captain John Stark, then barely thirty, alert and eager, destined two decades later to wrest immortal glory from the heights of Bennington; Major Israel Putnam, stanch and fearless in his early prime, who would win brighter laurels fighting against England than ever he had won in fighting for her; Robert Rogers the Ranger, forest hero of a hundred hazardous adventures, hairbreadth escapes, and daring ambuscades; possessed of an Indian's cunning and a Saxon's determination; Joseph Wait, lieutenant under Rogers, a man with a brilliant military record behind him and one more brilliant still before him, who was yet to give his life for his country; Samuel Robinson, captain in the Massachusetts ranks, the future pioneer of lovely Bennington, then an unnamed child of the fair Wilderness asleep among its hills, without a dream of fame. There was Philip Schuyler of the famous Albany family, commissary of the army, and showing at twenty-four that promise of greatness which should flower later in an illustrious career.

And the face of every man, colonial or regular, revealed not only admiration but affection as he addressed Lord Howe. But perhaps this feeling rose to even greater heights among the provincials, for Lord Howe was almost without exception the only English officer who treated them with respect. It was then an almost universal custom for British officers to look down from a pinnacle of arrogance upon the supposed ignorance and inferiority of their provincial associates, undoubtedly one of the causes which hastened the Revolution. But Lord Howe's was "the hand of steel in the glove of velvet." Despite his noble birth and high rank, despite every circumstance which raised him above his colonial brothers-in-arms, he had never in word or deed failed to treat them as friends and equals. Nay more, this young leader, with the humility of true greatness, had become their scholar, had learned of them the difficult art of forging Old World metal into New World weapons. He had studied the secrets of forest warfare from those who were best qualified to teach them—the intrepid Rangers; had gone with them upon their scouts, and shared their dangers and privations.

As a result he discarded on this campaign many a time-honoured British custom; gave orders that soldiers and officers alike should dispense with queues and wear their hair cut short; should abbreviate the long-skirted coats, at which enemies could snatch, to the length of jackets, wear leggings as a protection against briars; brown their muskets to prevent discovery, and carry with them only the barest necessities. He made himself the first example of this Spartan training; cut short his own luxuriant hair; wore the coat of a com-

mon soldier; washed his own linen in the wayside brook, and shared the private's ration of corn-meal and pork.

So now, as he stood on the shore, directing and advising, each soldier looked to him as the animating spirit; the "bright, particular star" of the campaign.

Boat after boat was launched upon the waveless lake that lay like some great opal in the sunrise. Among the first to embark was Lord Howe. With the same deference he would have shown a princess, he assisted Grace into the boat, and spread his cloak for her in the bow. Aubrey, at Lord Howe's urgent invitation, accompanied them, and Flying Swallow took his place among the oarsmen.

The oars dipped and flashed, and the boat swept forward to its position at the head of the central column with Lord Howe's own regiment, the Fifty-fifth Foot.

Suddenly from one of the colonial barges rang out from fife and drum the sauciest, most defiant melody that ear had ever heard. Lord Howe turned to Grace with a smile. "You have just listened to the first public performance of the famous composition of Dr. Shuckburg, which my colonials seem to have adopted as their national air." And he proceeded to tell how, while the British army lay encamped near Albany, the strange appearance and motley dress of the provincial troops had excited the mirth of a certain facetious English surgeon whose amusement had crystallized into a variation of an old song, once used in ridicule of Cromwell, which he had christened "Yankee Doodle," and presented in apparent seriousness to the provincial

musicians as the latest martial melody of England. Far from resenting this, however, the colonials had taken the offering in good faith, and ever since had played it morning, noon, and night.

"And, indeed," Lord Howe concluded, "I think the joke recoiled upon the witty doctor."

Aubrey interrupted with a laugh, "I am half-American myself, but faith! if they're not amusing. Only the last Sabbath Chaplain Cleaveland of the Massachusetts troops—parson they call him—preached a sermon from the text: 'Love your enemies'; and upon my soul they all sat grave as idols and never saw the humour of it. 'Love your enemies,' forsooth! and we engaged to send Montcalm and every other Frenchman straight to hades. Ye gods, what men and what manners!"

Lord Howe smiled. "Yet they have a great sense of humour, though it is of a flavour all its own. I do not like," he continued seriously, "the spirit some of our English officers exhibit toward their American comrades;—they but proclaim their own inferiority thereby. Any gentleman officer will find his equal in every regiment of the Americans. I know them well, and we should beware how we underestimate their abilities and feelings. Look at Colonel Washington at Fort Duquesne. After Braddock's colossal blunder, his coolness and skill saved the remnant of those demoralized troops. You may well be proud of your countrymen, Miss Stuart. They are a mighty nation in embryo, that may yet make England look to her laurels." He broke off to gaze at the scene before him. "See, is not that a beautiful sight!"

Grace looked with wondering eyes at the pageant spread before her. Never had St. Sacrement beheld such "pomp and circumstance of war." Nine hundred batteaux, one hundred and thirty-five whaleboats, and numerous rafts carrying baggage and artillery completely hid the surface of the lake. Thus advanced the greatest army the New World had ever known: Rogers and his Rangers led, and behind followed the six thousand regulars with the nine thousand colonials on either flank. A scene more picturesque, more rich in glowing hues no artist's eye could have imagined: the scarlet of the regulars, the blue of the colonials, the russet of the rangers, the blended colours of the tartans, made a shattered rainbow on the waters; swords and accoutrements flashed silver, and the sunshine glorified a host of banners borne proudly at the head of every regiment.

"How sweet, how infinitely sweet, was youth and life on such a day!" thought Lord Howe, as he glanced from the beauty of the scene about him to the beauty of the face beside him.

It was not yet ten o'clock when the vast procession commenced to enter the Narrows, here of necessity contracting into long lines many miles in length, frowned upon by mighty mountains and locked in the giant arms of the primeval forest. Drum and fife and trumpet reverberated through the woodland channel, and the sound of the pibroch waked the echoes of those alien hills which yet were strangely like the hills of Scotland,—so like that, at times, when the amethyst haze stole over them, they even wore the purple semblance of the heather. And St. Sacrement, fair

naiad of the wilderness—with its sparkling waters, its countless fairy islands and enfolding mountains—seemed to those Scottish soldiers but a New World image of Loch Lomond. But the lake had another point of likeness to its older sister; it, too, had known for centuries the horrors of feud and bloodshed; its pure air had echoed savage cries, and its limpid waves had mirrored hideous scenes. The weird notes of the bagpipes seemed no longer alien; the very echoes answered them like comrades.

Over her deerskin dress Grace wore the Royal Stuart tartan; and Lord Howe smilingly lifted a fringe of it which the wind had blown against his knee.

"Are you still half a rebel to his Majesty?" he inquired playfully.

"Your lordship is of Hanover, and I am of Stuart, yet I think no swords will be drawn between us," she answered, with a pretty dimpling smile flashing out like a sunbeam from her habitual earnestness.

"There is no loyalty like Scottish loyalty," said Lord Howe. "The house of Hanover can never hope to win such great devotion as that your kinsmen rendered to Charles Stuart. Yet you have shown a courage and loyalty as great."

The tears sprang quick and shining to her eyes. She lifted a fold of her tartan and kissed it.

"We Scots will never cease to render love and loyalty to Prince Charlie. Yet—that dream is dead.—The Stuarts, alas! will never sit again on Scotland's ancient throne. Having sworn fealty to Hanover, my lord, we will not fail in our allegiance."

Deeply moved, Lord Howe remained silent. A

moment later his presence was required in another part of the boat, and he turned thoughtfully away.

Aubrey took advantage of his absence to renew his rejected suit.

"Sweetheart, sweetheart," he cried, "why are you so cold to me, so indifferent, and why do you look so serious? Make this a very 'day of grace' for me indeed, grant me my petition."

But she drew her hands from his clasp. "Philip, Philip, say no more of this matter, what are our little lives beside this great enterprise? And how can I be aught but serious when my heart is so heavy with foreboding? For I dreamt a dream last night—O Philip—a strange, sad dream—and I know not what it may portend. I fear so greatly—oh, so greatly—for Lord Howe!"

Aubrey laughed. "Are you so foolish as to sorrow for a dream?"

A grieved look crossed her face. "Ah, but, Philip, 'tis ill to make light of dreams. Were not the wise men of old—patriarchs, kings, and prophets—warned by dreams?"

Aubrey laughed again, at what seemed to him sheer absurdity, and was about to make some contemptuous answer when Lord Howe appeared.

Grace was gazing with troubled eyes at the brilliant scene; one pretty hand hung over the side of the boat, and the slender fingers were dripping with pearls as fair as those encircling white throats at Versailles.

With an impatient gesture Aubrey moved away. Grace cast a wistful glance after him; then she turned to Lord Howe.

"O my lord," she cried, and he caught at once the note of entreaty in her voice. "Do not think me utterly foolish if I tell you of a dream I dreamt last night. I thought I stood in a shadowy forest with a strange hush all about me. An army was assembled there. But all were motionless and silent; they hardly seemed to breathe. And each man's eyes looked downward at something lying on the ground—the body of a man,—but the face I could not see because of those that stood between. It seemed that he was dead, for tears were in every eye. And a great anguish of heart came over me, and I wept for him whose face I could not see. O my lord, we of the Highlands put trust in dreams and second-sight; and I cannot doubt this dream was sent me that I might warn you of impending peril, for when I wakened my thought was all of you. O my lord, be prudent, do not lead the foremost line. Do not needlessly expose your life, I implore you! Remember that upon it hang the lives of an army!"

She laid her hand on his arm in gentle entreaty; and the soft light touch awaked in him the thrill he had felt that night by the lakeside.

"Believe me, I deeply appreciate your solicitude—your thought of me.—Nor could I disregard this warning if I would, for it chimes too utterly with my own forebodings."

She shivered. "God avert the omen!" Then, with an effort at composure, "Forgive me if I have troubled your already burdened mind with what may be only the vision of an overwrought fancy."

"Yes, we will try to think of it as that. Your heart

was heavy with a fear which found expression in a troubled dream. Dismiss it from your mind. Let no anxiety on my behalf darken your thoughts to-day, I implore you."

Thus he sought to comfort her as he would have comforted a frightened child.

So the sands of that wonderful day slipped through the hour-glass, till with the sinking sun the great flotilla reached a narrow strip of shore known as Sabbath-Day Point and there disembarked.

X

"THE DARK WOOD'S HUSH"

"O what so wildly fair as war!
From dancing skiff and dripping oar
Land down on yonder dreamy shore,
And drowsy let the drum be!

O proud as life the far crag's flush!
And sweet as youth the hermit-thrush!
O deep as death the dark wood's hush
Marching with Abercrombie!"

SUNSET over St. Sacrement. The sky had caught the martial colours of the lake, and set a mimic pageant in the west as gorgeous and as fleeting as that it counterfeited. Swiftly the glory faded, the scarlet flags of heaven were furled. The clouds became dim banners, torn and trailing, and splashed with crimson as with blood. Then the grey tents of dusk,—clouds riding high and spectral, like very ghosts of battle;—"Lights Out" from inaudible angel-trumpets, and the first star set a golden beacon in the waters of the Holy Lake.

It was two hours before sunset when the army disembarked for a brief rest and refreshment and, Lord Howe explained to Grace, to await the arrival of some of the rafts which had fallen behind the others. Before midnight they must be upon their way again.

"Then, my lord," she replied, "it is best that Fly-

ing Swallow and I should start as soon as may be on our return to Fort St. Frédéric."

His face became yet more grave. " When you have braved so many dangers in coming hither, how can I permit you to risk them all again? Let me persuade you to stay here with a strong guard till the outcome of this campaign is decided. If, God permitting, we win the fort, a message can be sent to your father to apprise him of your safety."

" O my lord, you are very kind, but I cannot obey your wishes. I *must* go back. Have no fear for me;—Flying Swallow will bring me safely through. You know he has been my brother and protector from childhood;—he will never let ill befall ' White Dawn '! "

Lord Howe had heard the Abnaki call her by that name, and had noted at once its significance—White Dawn—the purity and freshness of dawn. She had told him of the Champlain country,—of the lure of its far blue distances, of the sweep of its majestic waters, of the beautiful mountains which bordered but did not confine it,—and now with a sigh he thought: " She is herself the virgin spirit of Champlain,—a country unconfined, a land of liberty and beauty, where there are no chains of artifice to bind the soul." The country of Champlain was to him the promised land. A young Joshua going forth to battle, he looked with infinite yearning at the unconquered Canaan.

In a little clearing apart from the scene of bivouac, Grace and Lord Howe took final leave of each other. The shadow of the coming conflict was very dark, and in its path they stood. The solemnity of it marked their faces, and was manifest in their tones and ges-

tures. Lord Howe spoke in a low, grave voice, as he might have done before an altar and the tone in which she answered was the same. Again he told her, as he had told her in the tent at Fort William Henry, that he would never forget the service she had rendered him; that if God spared his life he would prove his gratitude in some stronger medium than words, but that whatever befell he would remember her and bless her.

"Think of me as your friend. Living or dying I will be your friend."

"My lord," she said, "you have already proved your friendship: you have shielded and protected me. I shall carry your promise in my heart as a talisman of hope through all the days to come."

He drew a gold signet-ring from his finger. "Will you not take this in token of my friendship,—see, it has the Howe crest—a Fess between three Wolves' Heads. It may be in my power some day to give you some greater thing. Let this be but an earnest of that to come. Keep it for my sake."

The tears had gathered in her eyes. She took the ring without speaking, touching it almost reverently, and hid it in the bosom of her deerskin gown. Then, after a pause:

"My lord, I will keep it always in memory of you."

A great dread of the future overshadowed her; and upon him lay the presage of doom. The dusk was falling fast, the colour dying out of the sky like the rose from a fading cheek; but it was not alone the dusk of night that was falling over them, but the dusk of death and an ominous future. He took her hands, and closed

his own over them. Fear for him darkened her lovely eyes, and seeing this he felt a mournful exultation. For one long moment their eyes in the dusk looked full into each other's. It might have seemed to a beholder like some last tryst—some lovers' parting,—save for the calmness, the absence of all passion. There was about it the sanctity of a covenant. They stood thus,—for that long moment—silent, motionless, strangely set apart from all the world; then Lord Howe gently kissed her hands and released them, and as he did so, beheld Philip Aubrey approaching.

Gay and serene as ever, the debonair young captain of the 60th Foot came laughingly forward as if parting were but a stirrup-cup to be quaffed with a jest. Blithely he caught her hands to his lips, and blithely kissed them, saying, "Farewell, sweetheart; when next we meet, the ensign of old England will have displaced the golden lilies on Fort Carillon, never fear."

She looked wistfully into his laughing face. "O Philip, I pray it may be so;" then turned from him to Lord Howe, "O my lord, be warned—do not expose yourself needlessly, for my sake. And may God protect you both!"

Half an hour later when the canoe containing Grace and Flying Swallow was visible only as a speck upon the darkening lake, Lord Howe joined Captain Stark at a soldier's supper by the blazing camp-fire. The brief meal ended, the two friends, reclining side by side upon a bearskin, talked long and gravely of Fort Carillon and the best means of achieving its capture.

"Miss Stuart was right," said Lord Howe, "the only feasible way to take Ticonderoga is by siege. To

attempt it otherwise would mean to sacrifice brave lives in vain."

"You will remember, my lord," replied Stark, "that you expressed the same opinion on our scout last year when you saw the fort from the top of Sugar Loaf Hill. You said then that cannon planted there would compel a surrender."

"Captain Stark, whatever happens, for my sake use all your influence with the General to prevent him from attempting to take the fort by storm—My God! it would be terrible——"

Stark looked up surprised.

"You are the only one who can influence the General. The hope of the army rests on you, my lord."

And the gallant ranger strode away to give some final orders to his men, while Lord Howe lay gazing thoughtfully into the fire. He beheld therein visions of war,—march and battle and siege,—but shining through them and above them all, with starlike radiance, a woman's face. In Grace he saw embodied the dauntless spirit of the American colonists, a spirit which defied danger and hardship for the sake of an ideal. His face was already turned toward the heights, he breathed already their rarefied air; and from their foot-hills he began to have a glimpse of their far prospect. He saw in a flash of vision the great unfolding of a nation—a world slowly taking shape from out the vapour,—a new star burning as yet with veiled and misty radiance, but foreordained to fill the earth with its shining—the star of the New Republic.

His breath came rapidly, his eyes shone. As swiftly

as it had come, the vision passed. With a sigh, Lord Howe looked up to see Philip Aubrey standing in the crimson circle of firelight.

"Come, lad, share my couch with me for at least an hour," he said, regarding the gay young face. "I wish to talk with you."

As Aubrey, with a laugh, flung himself down beside his friend on the bearskin, Lord Howe observed anew in him the undeniable charm and lovableness which were his heritage from Marjory Campbell, the gay, coquettish girl-mother from whom he had also inherited his light-hearted irresponsibility. Marjory Campbell's merry, thoughtless nature had utterly belied her grave Scotch ancestry and upbringing. She had been a gay-hued butterfly fluttering above a sombre pool that for centuries had mirrored only moss-grown rocks and forest-shadows. Philip Aubrey seemed so absolutely his mother's son. If his father's nature—strong, silent, controlled—was latent in him—it was so deeply latent that it seemed hardly probable that any crisis would ever bring it to the surface.

Lord Howe's affection for his friend was brotherly—the eight years' difference in their ages making Aubrey seem to him like his younger brothers at home in England whom he loved and missed. His appraisal of Aubrey's character was singularly true; it recognized the charm, but did not deny the weakness. Aubrey, careless and debonair, easily moved by kind motives when they did not require of him too great a sacrifice, was still at twenty-five more the boy than the man, with that unconscious cruelty of youth that is cruel because it is unthinking.

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"Philip," Lord Howe said sadly, laying a hand on the other's shoulder, "you know the feeling I have had that my life will be required on this campaign!—And this beautiful child.—How can I leave her to a hideous fate in this dark wilderness! If it might be given me to rescue and protect her!—But God decides!

"Aubrey, she loves you,—you do not need to tell me! Be worthy of her, lad,—strive to be worthy, if any man can be worthy of such a heart as hers,—a rare, rare jewel requiring to be locked in the treasure-casket of a loyal breast. Should you ever be untrue to her, Aubrey,—untrue in thought or word or deed,—though I am in my grave, my spirit will not let you rest. I promised to protect her, and I will protect her, through time and through eternity. My purpose is too strong to turn aside for death—a promise has nothing to do with years—it is a thing of the soul, and while God lives, it lives! Living or dying, I will protect her."

Aubrey was speechless, awed despite himself by Lord Howe's look and words. There were depths in his friend's nature which rebuked the shallows in his own whenever he became conscious of these, which alas! was not often. He welcomed the sound of the bugles giving the signal to re-embark, for he was thus saved the necessity of an answer. Yet, despite his evasion, he could not wholly rid himself of the impression which Lord Howe's words had made upon him. He felt as if he had been the witness to a solemn contract.

By eleven o'clock the army was again in motion. The night was clear and dark with a heaven of stars

above and a reflected heaven beneath so perfect that every oar-blade seemed to dip into stars. The men rowed with muffled oars, scarcely speaking above a whisper, for the enemy's outposts were very near. Slowly, stealthily, the fleet crept forward, a dark serpent mysteriously uncoiled, till the lake commenced to narrow to its outlet and the first flicker of dawn showed them the stern face of Bald Mountain destined to be known hereafter as Roger's Rock.

Soon they passed Isle au Mouton, or Prisoners' Island, at which Aubrey looked with a sigh, remembering his confinement there.

The first to land in the little cove beyond, forever after to bear his name, was Lord Howe. With the light of the summer morning full upon his noble young face, he sprang ashore with a strange eagerness, as if some mysterious power beckoned him on. The French outpost, alarmed by the approach of so large a force, retreated without opposition, abandoning their camp with all its supplies to the delighted provincials. By noon the entire army, confident of victory, had disembarked and were drawn up in four columns on the beach, awaiting the command to march.

Stark and Rogers with the Rangers and the colonial regiments went forward to reconnoitre; and the main body of the army followed, the central column, somewhat in advance of the rest, led by Lord Howe, with Major Israel Putnam and two hundred Rangers.

It was now past noon of the 6th of July, a breathless midsummer day, and the heat was intense. The impenetrable wall of forest hemmed them in on every side. The dense roof of interlacing branches—hem-

lock and oak and pine,—shut out the sunlight and made an almost twilight gloom. The ranks were soon broken as the men, flinging away provisions and accoutrements, pushed a difficult path through the tangled underbrush. Hour after hour they struggled on, bewildered and exhausted. Even the Rangers, accustomed to blind trails, became confused and lost their way.

They had been following the left bank of the Outlet, the stream by which the waters of Lake George empty into those of Lake Champlain. Presently they reached a place where a small river, flowing from the west, mingled with the Outlet. In their front rippled the music of the Rapids. It was nearly four o'clock by the sun, and almost night in the forest. The ground had begun to rise toward an oak-crowned knoll.

Suddenly the sound of firing, rapid and sharp, though dulled by intervening woods, could be heard ahead.

Lord Howe turned quickly to the man at his side: "Putnam, what does that mean?"

"I do not know," was the answer, "but with your lordship's leave, I will see."

"I will go with you, Putnam," said Lord Howe.

"No, no," cried Putnam, "keep back, my lord, keep back; you are the idol and soul of the army. If I am killed my life will be little loss, but yours is of infinite importance."

"Putnam," Lord Howe replied solemnly, "your life is as dear to you as mine is to me. I am determined to go."

Putnam shook his head protestingly, but seeing the

look of resolution on the young General's face, made no further remonstrance.

Lord Howe turned to his men: "Forward, lads, forward, in the name of England and King George!" he cried, and pressed on beside Putnam at the head of the line.

And yet, even in his unwavering determination to fulfil the utmost of a soldier's duty—did not an imploring hand seem to touch his arm,—did not a soft voice seem to whisper: "O my lord, be warned,—do not needlessly expose your life."

They pressed forward as rapidly as the condition of the ground would permit. Louder and louder rang the musket-fire in their front, but no enemy was visible. Suddenly there came a lull—a breathless silence. The army came to a halt with firelocks poised. Lord Howe stood motionless. There was upon his face a strange look of exaltation, as if he heard a voice from very far away. A moment passed—the space perhaps of a dozen heart-throbs. Then—"Qui vive?" rang the sharp challenge from the hidden enemy. "Français!" came the instant answer, but in vain. Undeceived, the French replied with a furious volley. Lord Howe swayed and fell. Putnam ran to him, knelt and raised his head. The ball had pierced his heart. He was dead. The look of exaltation was stamped with the seal of eternity upon his face. With a groan Putnam threw himself upon the body of his friend, his strong frame shaking with convulsive sobs.

The fatal volley of the French had been answered by a brisk fire from the English, and a hot skirmish was raging. But now from man to man, from rank

to rank, rushed like a resistless wave the dreadful news: "Lord Howe is dead!" and in its wake rode panic. Bewildered and dismayed, deprived of their beloved leader, confronted by an enemy they could not see, the men huddled frantically together or scattered wildly toward the rear. Such a fate as befell Braddock was impending when the intrepid Rangers, fighting forest-fashion behind rock and tree, rallied the fleeing forces. The anguish of love grew molten in revenge; the French after a desperate defence were annihilated.

But no cheer of victory rose from the English ranks. There in the dusk of the wood, as in some dim cathedral, they stood bareheaded, tears stealing down each bronzed and roughened face, for along those forest-aisles there was borne the silent, lifeless figure of him who but an hour before had been their idol and their inspiration. The hush of death had fallen upon life.

From the moment of embarkation, Lord Howe and Aubrey had been separated,—the latter having rejoined his regiment, the Royal Americans—and in the confusion he had heard nothing of the fatal tidings. As he stood now at the head of his company, Aubrey caught sight of two soldiers advancing, bearing between them the body of a man, and as they approached he started forward to the side of the rude bier. With a sharp cry he recognized the face of Lord Howe, and sinking to his knees, even as Putnam had done, he threw himself upon the body of his friend, and sobbed like a girl.

"All that night they mourned for Howe, and told his virtues." "With him the soul of the army seemed to expire." And Aubrey, remembering the friend who

but the night before had lain beside him on the bear-skin, wept like a child unashamed.

"Thus perished in the early manhood of an illustrious career the one man around whose name clusters the affectionate regards of the grateful colonists, so beloved by his associates that even Stark, of Revolutionary fame, was wont to say that had not death separated them, he might have become a tory and fought under British colours."

On the evening of that fatal 6th of July, Alan Stuart and his daughter were alone together in one of the stone buildings within Fort Carillon. Grace and Flying Swallow, embarking some hours earlier a few miles below Ticonderoga, had been descried by the keen eyes of Red Plume, who had been accordingly dispatched by Alan Stuart, now stationed with his adopted countrymen at Carillon, to bring the wanderers thither.

A stormy scene had ensued between father and daughter. Bitterly he reproached her for disobeying him, bitterly accused her of ingratitude to the French.

"I will never forgive you," he said sternly. "You disobeyed my express command—my earnest wish. Know you not what the Bible saith: 'The wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience'?"

Grace shrank a little involuntarily, but she answered firmly: "Father, you know the Bible does not mean what you would make it. My conscience stands absolved; I have but done my duty. That in doing it I was obliged to disobey you I regret, but I do not repent my deed. As to my 'ingratitude,' as you have called it, there, too, I feel no guilt. From the day Montcalm

broke faith at Fort William Henry, leaving helpless hundreds to be butchered, I vowed I would never be leagued with those murderers. As to the shelter they gave us, that debt is long since paid."

She was as proud as he, though with her, pride was mellowed by a woman's gentleness.

"Already has retribution fallen on them you went to warn," he answered. "Not an hour since an Indian runner brought the tidings that the English were surprised in the woods yonder by one of our outposts, and Lord Howe, their leader, instantly killed. I tell you, rebellious girl, the Lord will deliver them into our hands!"

She gave a little moaning cry, "O God! Lord Howe!" grew very pale, and hurried from the room.

Arrived in her own little chamber, she sank to her knees by the bed, in the grey evening twilight, and wept—the bitter voiceless weeping of the heart. Her friend, her dearest friend, was dead. All her deep horror of the future; this new estrangement from her father, her vague dread of de Valois, the cloud of Aubrey's displeasure,—which despite his gaiety at parting she knew had not wholly lifted—rushed upon her in an overwhelming flood. Weeping, she raised imploring hands: "O friend,—you who are with God,—remember the promise you made yesterday—to me on earth. O friend, remember, and protect me still!"

XI

THE UNAVAILING BRAVE

DAWN of the 7th of July found the French camp in the grip of a strange activity. Montcalm, who for days had been uncertain whether to fall back on Fort St. Frédéric or to stand his ground, had reached a decision. He knew himself to be outnumbered many times by the English army, but his courage—the gay, insouciant, French courage—did not fail him. He would entrench Carillon, make a desperate defence, and trust to the folly and ignorance of his foe.

Across the promontory of Ticonderoga, half-a-mile west of the fort, rises a steep ridge. Here Montcalm proposed to build an abattis. The first rays of the sun gleamed redly upon a host of axes flashing out defiance with every ringing stroke. Officers and men alike, stripped to their shirts, toiled under the burning sun at the colossal task. Above them shone the regimental colours; behind them, from the bastions of the fort, rose the snow-and-gold of the lilies, caressed by the languid air. The axes flashed, descended, and the trees fell before them like a smitten host. Oak and birch and hemlock were ruthlessly stripped of their young foliage, and the trunks piled one upon the other. The mighty breastwork thus constructed was nearly nine feet high, the upper tier of single logs with notches cut

for loopholes, and sod and bags of sand upon the top, with spaces left through which to fire.

The line zigzagged along the top of the ridge. From it the ground fell away, here smoothly in a natural slope, there roughly in undulations. For the distance of a musket-shot the trees had been felled and left lying, with their tops turned outwards, among the stumps. Directly in front of the breastwork, heavy branches, tangled and intertwined, lifted their sharpened points toward the enemy like a line of bayonets. The result was a formidable abattis, impregnable to musketry, which looked, in the words of a Massachusetts officer, " like a forest laid flat by a hurricane."

At sunset the task was finished. The French soldiers prepared to bivouac behind their works, set their kettles boiling, and flung themselves down to rest.

In the crimson afterglow of that evening, Alan Stuart and his daughter, accompanied by the voluble Dorette and the sphinx-like Flying Swallow, walked slowly along the line of works. Grace had shrunk from the ordeal, dreading to encounter Rupert de Valois serving as a colonel in the battalion of La Reine. It was quite evident, however, that he had not taken her threat to warn the enemy in earnest, for he had made not the slightest effort to thwart her mission. Alan Stuart surveyed the bristling outworks, and smiled exultantly. In his daughter's eyes was a great fear. Looking at the crimson sky she shuddered, thinking it like blood.

When they reached the battalion La Reine, stationed on the right of the line, Rupert de Valois came to greet them, a gorgeous figure in his uniform of

white-and-gold. He regarded Grace with a peculiar smile, but his eyes rested darkly upon Flying Swallow. Her heart leaped in her throat. With an effort she preserved her calm. Could it be he knew the truth? She had no fear for herself, but much for Flying Swallow. But the next moment Rupert de Valois, bowing low, had raised her hand and kissed it with a gaiety that disarmed her every fear.

Grace scarcely slept that night—not from dread of Rupert de Valois—that ghost for a time was laid—but from fearful presage of the battle that must come with day.

Before dawn she rose, and went to her father. He was standing at one of the embrasures of the fort, looking out toward the not distant outworks still shrouded in darkness. The candlelight illumined his dress—no longer buckskin, but the white uniform of France.

With a little cry Grace flung her arms around his neck.

"Father, father, in God's name, do not go—not in this dress—to fight your own people!—I cannot bear it!"

He smiled—the cold and bitter smile that of late had been stamped upon his face.

"Ingrate and false to the old Scottish blood."

The protesting colour swept into her face. "There is one who did not think me false, and he as true a Scot as you!—I tried to tell you that first night, and you would not listen. Hear me now! This is the message of Inverawe to Alan Stuart: 'Tell him to live out his life in peace. . . . For I shall never follow him

to work him vengeance. . . . And tell him'—O father, never would I repeat these words if you misjudged me not so cruelly—'tell him that if aught on earth can atone for his deed it is the courage and devotion of his daughter who risked her life to save her countrymen.' O father, father, I am as true a Scot as you. Hating England is not loving Scotland. Father, have mercy,—do not fight against the clans!"

A look of frenzy changed his face to that of a fanatic. He tore the restraining arms from about his neck, and, wrenching his claymore from its sheath, raised it high above his head, speaking fiercely between set teeth. "If I forget thee, O Scotland, may my right hand forget her cunning!"

Like an avenging angel he was gone. Grace saw him stride fiercely toward the breastwork through the mist of dawn.

It had been her father's wish that she should seek refuge at St. Frédéric, but she had insisted upon remaining at Fort Carillon till the fate of the day should be decided. She returned now to the embrasure he had so lately quitted.

Within the French works all was action. At the first gleam of dawn the drums began to beat, and the troops behind the breastwork took their stations.

Montcalm had not ill-judged the character of Abercrombie. Deprived of the wise counsel and influence of Lord Howe, the English General was no more capable of steering a safe course than a derelict. The hand of the helmsman had been withdrawn, and the ship was at the mercy of any wind of chance or folly that might rise to hurl it to destruction.

Abercrombie's chief engineer, who had reconnoitred the French lines from the top of Sugar Loaf—that dark hill frowning above the fort, later appropriately rechristened Mount Defiance—had reported to his general that the works could be carried by the bayonet. Vainly did Stark, remembering Lord Howe's entreaty, attempt to dissuade his stubborn superior; Abercrombie, infatuated by confidence, adopted the one course which Montcalm desired, and, leaving his cannon idle at Lake George, gave orders to take the works by storm.

"Leadership perished with Lord Howe, and nothing was left but blind, headlong valour."

It was noon of that fateful July day when a musket volley from the forest in his front warned Montcalm of his enemy's advance. Instantly a gun was fired as a signal to his soldiers, who had been strengthening the breastwork all the morning, to cease work, and form for battle.

Early that morning the English army had begun their march from the saw-mill at the Rapids, abandoned by Montcalm, along the military road between the lakes. They were advancing over the same ground they had traversed upon the fatal 6th, but in what different spirits! Two days before, glory and victory had been the only words emblazoned on their souls; to-day despondency lay like a cloud, through which hope shone but dimly. Aubrey, however, as they came within sight of the fort, began to undergo a change of feeling. He had mourned sincerely for Lord Howe, his friend and the object of his boyish adoration, but, he reflected philosophically, one could not mourn for-

ever. It might be his own lot to die next. He must turn his thoughts from grief to glory,—not, for him, an at all difficult matter, since his emotions were of the quicksilver variety.

Major Duncan Campbell touched his arm, and turned on him a haggard face. "Aubrey, why did you all conspire to deceive me by calling this place Carillon? It is *Ticonderoga!* Lad, I shall never live unscathed to see another sun. No, 'twas not *his* ghost I saw yest're'en, but the ghost of myself, and that is ever fatal!"

But Aubrey's Highland blood had never made him credulous of dreams and warnings. "My dear Major Duncan," he exclaimed impatiently, "how can you put faith in such absurdity! There is naught but victory before us. To-morrow's sun will find you hoisting our colours to the top of yonder fortress."

Duncan Campbell shook his head. "You may be there, lad—God grant so!—but my feet will never cross the ramparts of Ticonderoga."

They had already left the shelter of the woods, and before them lay the labyrinth of felled trees and tangled boughs, still green with withering foliage, that formed the abattis. Beyond it they could see the rough logs of the breastwork, but not a man was visible. The drums beat the charge, the bugles sounded, and high above all rose the weird skirling of the bagpipes. Forward they pressed as rapidly as the broken ground would permit; led by the scarlet-coated regulars of the 55th—Lord Howe's own regiment—and the tartaned Scots of the Black Watch, and supported by the blue-clad provincials and the Rangers.

Suddenly a sheet of flame leaped from the breastwork. Grapeshot and musket-balls tore their way like demons through the air, to claim their victims in the reeling ranks. The order had been to charge with fixed bayonets, but finding themselves entangled in the abattis, the English soon began to return the fire. They struggled on through the deadly maze of boughs with stubborn courage, the Highlanders hewing at the bristling barrier with their broadswords. Repeatedly Aubrey found himself at the foot of the breastwork, only to be swept back with his comrades by the fatal cross-fire that poured in upon them from front and flank.

But Abercrombie, himself in safety at the saw-mill two miles distant, refused to believe the works impregnable, and gave orders for a renewal of the attack.

With sinking hopes, but with undaunted courage, the men again advanced. Stumbling over fallen trees, caught in a veritable network of tangled branches, their comrades stricken down on every side by that insidious foe whose face was hidden, the English soldiery again swept forward, a crimson wave of valour, destined to be shattered utterly against the jagged cliffs of the abattis.

Meantime, from the embrasure in the fort, Grace watched with fearful eyes the appalling picture. Again and again she saw the scarlet lines recoil, roll back, regather, surge forward to the impact, and shiver into spray upon the breastwork. She saw brave lives go out like stars, unnumbered and unnoticed; and the pitiful waste, the pitiful futility of it all, smote upon her heart like bells of doom.

She struck her hands together repeatedly in a pas-

sion of helplessness. "O God! dear God! Lord Howe! If he had lived this never would have been!" And again: "O God, they are of my blood—surely I am not false to Scotland thus! Dear God, be merciful and spare their lives! Give victory, or if not, make an end to slaughter!"

It was too far to distinguish faces, but she singled out one man as Aubrey, and never, for a moment, lost sight of him. She saw him hurled hither and thither, a single drop of that gigantic wave, now hidden in a mist of smoke, now visible through its shifting curtain, surrounded by the fluttering tartans and flashing broadswords of the Highlanders. She saw him bend and snatch a fallen flag, spring to the parapet and begin to mount it. Up, up, he climbed, the crimson folds streaming out above his head like pinions. She held her breath, her heart at vigil in her eyes. Then,—a gush of flame from the breastwork, a giant smoke-cloud billowing outwards, and banner and standard-bearer alike were gone. With a smothered cry Grace sank back into the embrasure, and hid her face in her hands.

All that midsummer afternoon the crimson sea still beat against those murderous cliffs; and the spray of doomed and shattered lives was tossed from it in blood.

The French, their "dove-white" uniforms glinting in the sun like snowy plumage, fought with characteristically gay abandon. Above the roar of musketry rang blithely "Vive le Roi!" "Vive notre Général!" Montcalm had doffed his coat, but not his courtly grace. He was omnipresent; in every place where danger threatened, and always with a laughing word of cheer for the imperilled line. In their midst, a Covenanter

in fanatic courage, Alan Stuart fought as fiercely as any Frenchman there. Strange irony of fate that the father should shed the blood of those for whom the daughter prayed!

Toward five o'clock came flood-tide. The English, rent and shaken, but still unconquered, gathered themselves for a yet more desperate onset. Branches caught and clutched them like demon-fingers, impeding their advance; briars tore and tripped them; with prayers and groans and curses they staggered on. Like the breath of pestilence passed the flame from the breastwork; the assailants sank before it, smitten like the army of Sennacherib before the destroying angel. Aubrey shuddered violently at the hideous spectacle before him. Everywhere lay the dead and dying; huddled upon the ground, suspended from tangled branches, transfixed upon jagged limbs. One man, hanging outstretched upon a sharpened bough, might have been a carven image of the Crucifixion, so perfectly had he assumed in death the very attitude of the dying Christ.

The splendid Saxon courage that of old had hurled back the Roman legions rode incarnate in the dauntless crimson lines. But each man of the Black Watch wrapped glory about him as it were a belted plaid. The deathless valour of the Scot that has glorified a thousand battlefields before and since that day; that was victorious at Bannockburn, that was crushed and butchered at Culloden, that charged invincible at Waterloo and died before the redoubts of Majuba Hill —was here in its undying youth, its unquenchable fire, its glorious renown. Aubrey saw a Highland piper,

mortally wounded, propped against a stump, sending forth with his last breath the war-notes of the pibroch. He heard others, their plaids chequered with the death-tartan, "cry to their companions not to lose a thought on them, but to mind the honour of their country." And even on this field of carnage a valour so sublime rebuked his careless courage.

As he slashed a desperate path through the abattis, Aubrey found Campbell of Inverawe again beside him, that look of strange fatality frozen upon his face. Together they began to cut their way toward the breastwork. Suddenly Aubrey saw a man in front of him, the ensign of the 55th, fling up both hands, reel, and go down, carrying the colours with him. Like a leopard Aubrey sprang to him, snatched the flag from his relaxing grasp, and waving it, wet with its bearer's blood, above his head, dashed for the breastwork.

The attack had been directed toward the right of the French line, defended, among others, by the battalion of La Reine. As Aubrey gained a foothold on the breastwork and began to mount, Rupert de Valois, with reckless abandon, leaned over and showered mocking curses, mixed with musket-balls, upon his foe. But Aubrey, laughing back defiance, climbed on and up. The death-fire scorched his face, the great flag, blood-baptized, streamed over him, but still unscathed, he sprang aloft, a young war-god with the shadowing folds of the stained flag the symbol of his power.

For a moment victory beckoned. The French line seemed to weaken. The great wave, rising high, overflowed into the breastwork. Aubrey, carried forward

on its crest, found himself face to face with Alan Stuart.

The Scot, possessed with the mad lust of vengeance, rushed with such fury on the young standard-bearer, that the latter, recoiling, barely escaped impalement on his broadsword. Aubrey, still firmly grasping the colours, returned the thrust. He had no wish to injure the father of Grace Stuart, but he did not care to die by his hand. And thus they thrust and lunged and parried upon a parapet slippery with blood and cumbered with both white and crimson-coated slain.

Suddenly as they fought, the Scotsman shrieked at Aubrey: "Heaven curse you, English popinjay! I'll let you know the reason why I hate you! I am your uncle's murderer! You know his name at last!—I hated the whole brood of Campbells—false hounds that lick the hand of Hanover! As I cursed Donald Campbell when he died, even so I curse you now! Your traitor blood shall never mingle with that of a child of mine!"

As the words of revelation fell from Stuart's lips, Aubrey, forgetting all defence, lowered his sword. The next instant what might have been his death-wound was averted by the Highland targe thrust suddenly between the combatants. Alan Stuart and Campbell of Inverawe stood face to face!

XII

THE DOOM OF INVERAWE

IN spite of sundering seas and severing years, destiny had worked its will at last. There on the top of the breastwork they confronted each other,—these two whom Fate and circumstance had made mortal enemies; these two, who out of all the world dreaded each other most. And there was shrinking on the part of both, betrayed by the dilating eye and the paling cheek, by the breath caught and quickened.

Then the spell that held Inverawe passed, giving way to another more terrible. The eyes of the murdered Donald seemed to pierce him through the eyes of his murderer. Spirit-haunted, convinced of his doom, he fairly sprung upon the guilty man, madly eager to yield himself to the fate that had so long awaited him. But Alan Stuart, seeing ever the murdered Donald in his clansman's guise, recoiled from him conscience-stricken, vainly seeking to avoid the desperate Scot. But Inverawe could not be turned aside; it had been easier to divert the arrow once loosed from the bow. He hurled aside like straws the men between; he rushed inexorably upon his shrinking enemy.

Confronted in an angle of the breastwork, Stuart wheeled and stood at bay.

"Donald Campbell! Donald Campbell!" he cried,

and the words rang despairingly above the battle-thunder, "you have haunted me all these years. Why have you followed me here?"

For a breathless instant the two chieftains confronted each other, the one in the glowing scarlet of the Royal Stuart, the other in the sombre tartans of the Black Watch.

Then Stuart repeated his question. "For God's sake, Donald Campbell; why have you followed me here?"

It was never answered. The next moment Inverawe sprung relentlessly upon his unwilling adversary. Shuddering, Stuart wrenched his pistol free and fired. With the blood streaming from his shoulder, Inverawe staggered back. Stuart stood trembling, the pistol falling from his hand. Obsessed by the idea that the man before him was a spirit, he had hardly expected the shot to take effect.

Around him the tide of battle surged and ebbed, but Stuart stood as rapt as if the fatal meeting had chanced beside some lonely tarn or on some solitary heath.

Inverawe sank back into the arms of a tartaned comrade, Lieutenant George Leslie, crying faintly: "Donald Campbell! Donald Campbell! We have met at *Ticonderoga!*"

Meanwhile, Philip Aubrey, snatched from death by the shield of Inverawe, had joined battle fiercely with his white-coated enemies. Still grasping the flag, he maintained for some minutes a foothold on the breastwork. Then,—a gush of flame from the French muskets—a volley that shook the logs beneath his feet—a

stabbing pain in the arm that grasped the flag, and he sank into oblivion.

But the magnificent courage of the Black Watch could not avail to save the day, although they fought with "such ardour that it was difficult to bring them off." Inverawe had not been alone in the scaling of the breastwork. Captain John Campbell and a few of his bravest followers mounted beside him, and, leaping down among the white-coated soldiery, received their death-thrust from the French bayonets. Out of more than a thousand men, over half had met death or cruel wounds.

Nor did the colonials fall behind the regulars in courage. The blue-coats, too, forced their way to the front of the breastwork beside their scarlet-coated comrades.

With the ebbing sun the tide of the assailants ebbed also for the last time. The exhausted and despairing troops fell back in wild confusion. They had made six successive charges in as many hours; they had done all that unfaltering human courage could do, and in vain. "A gallant army had been sacrificed by the blunder of its chief." How great a victory might have been achieved had Lord Howe lived to direct and prevent, it were vain to dream. They only knew that had he commanded, such ruthless slaughter never would have been. "The death of one man had been the ruin of thousands."

There were some who fancied during that dreadful afternoon that they saw Lord Howe, a ghostly figure with a faint, sad smile, hover above that deadly parapet, his hand upraised as if in warning. To dying eyes

he seemed more real—this figure from the world they were about to enter—than the figures of flesh-and-blood beside them, belonging to the world they were leaving.

In the crimson sunset his faithful clansmen, some themselves desperately wounded, bore Campbell of Inverawe from the fatal field. And those who bent above him heard him murmur faintly, "Ticonderoga! Ticonderoga! The death-name! The death-name!"

That night, Aubrey, tossing in pain and fever on his rude bed of boughs, re-lived with hideous vividness that fearful day. With all his heart he cursed Alan Stuart, the shadow of whose crime had fallen between him and Grace. This bitterness swelled and deepened the bitterness of defeat. He had boasted that he would unfurl the flag of England from the ramparts of Ticonderoga. But memory was ruthless. When the smoke had cleared from above the breastwork for the last time, the flag of the golden lilies still waved triumphant in the sunset light.

When the sweet midsummer twilight spread its pitying wings above the battlefield, only the English dead remained. The host that had marched so proudly to the attack, with flags flaunting gaily in the noonday sun, were in headlong flight beneath their furled and tattered banners. Grim panic—the vulture that may seize upon the bravest army after great defeat—had them in its talons. They stumbled on as rapidly as exhaustion would permit, flinging away provisions and accoutrements,—not even stopping to regain their shoes from the mud of the marshes they were obliged to cross.

The morning after the battle they reached Lake George, and there, still haunted by the terror of pursuit, they rushed so wildly into the batteaux that had it not been for cool-headed Colonel Bradstreet these would have been overturned. Abercrombie, whose cowardice gained him the epithet of "Nabby Crombie," dispatched orders to Colonel Cummings, the commander of Fort William Henry, "to send all the sick and wounded and all the heavy artillery to New York without delay"; evidently believing that city to be the only safe refuge from French invasion.

How different was this embarkation from that of but four days earlier! Then, high-hearted hopes and swelling pride, now, dejection and despair; then, the splendour and the pageant masking the hideous countenance of war, now, the grim reality, the spectre with the rosy masque thrown off; exhaustion and disease, and groans of wounded men. "Not as they came, indeed, did the proud armament return."

It was not until dusk hid the distant field that Grace stirred from her place in the embrasure. She would not meet her father's exultant eyes. Her face wore the bitter calm of a great defeat,—strange masque for such childlike beauty.

On the day after his wonderful victory, Montcalm erected on the battlefield—so glorious to him, so fatal to the English—a great Cross, on which were inscribed in Latin these words from the 83rd Psalm, referring to the defeat of the Midianites by Gideon: "Make their nobles like Oreb and like Zeeb; yea, all their princes as Zebah and Zalmunna;" and below, these

lines, triumphant witness to the faith of their soldier-author, Montcalm himself:

"Soldier and chief and rampart's strength are nought;
Behold the conquering Cross! 'Tis God the triumph wrought!"

Nine days after the battle, Campbell of Inverawe's haunted spirit passed to join that of his murdered cousin, whose promise to meet him at Ticonderoga had been so strangely fulfilled. He had been borne from the fatal field to the home of his kinsmen, the Gilchrists of Fort Edward. Now the mystic prophecy had been consummated, the mind of the dying man had broken the shackles of fear that had so long enthralled him, and lay at peace. At the last he raised himself, a strange light shining in his eyes, stretched out his hands to his unearthly visitant, whispered "Ticonderoga!" and so died.

XIII

DEATH IN THE FOREST

THUS passed like a mist, like a mirage, the English dream of glory. An iridescent bubble, it was shattered on the points of the French bayonets, a falling star, it flashed across the sky and vanished, quenched in blood. The scarlet-clad invaders troubled blue Champlain no more. It dreamed again its dream of ancient peace, and mirrored in its bosom only the fleur-de-lis.

But to Grace the old-time peace did not return. As the summer grew and ripened—even as her lovely girlhood was unconsciously ripening and deepening into fuller, richer womanhood—she dreamed ever of Philip Aubrey—wistful, half-fearful dreams. What had been his fate!—She had seen him stricken down while carrying the colours, and she knew from Flying Swallow that his body had not been found among the English dead. Her father might have told her more, but he never spoke, and she was too proud to ask him. True to her promise, she never mentioned Aubrey's name.

On the sweet companionship of father and daughter a blight had fallen. From the day she had disobeyed him, Alan Stuart had treated her with unrelaxing sternness. They would sit together for hours, rarely speaking. There was no bridge to span the chasm.

The estrangement seemed irreparable. He had spoken truly: with Aubrey had come sorrow, discord, and distrust. The old peace was far removed,—a star that had sunken far below the horizon,—too far, it seemed, to shine again upon these waters troubled by the stranger's coming.

Grace could no longer venture far from Fort St. Frédéric, for war-parties of hostile Indians were abroad. Yet a danger more potent lurked at home. Rupert de Valois, in these sweet langourous days, grew to be an even more baleful shadow. Grace could hardly stir beyond the cabin that he did not steal to her side with his passionate-breathing words and glances. Fearless of all else, she grew to feel for him an overpowering dread.

These apparently chance encounters had been brought about by Dorette, who had become the Duke's willing ally. Dorette had no intention of being deliberately false to her mistress, but Rupert de Valois' whispered flatteries and frequent gifts had found an unmistakable way to her gay French heart. She consoled her conscience by the reflection that when Grace was a duchess in la belle France she would forgive Dorette for having forced that honour upon her.

Alan Stuart came to realize that the Englishman had been far the lesser of two evils. Aubrey might be a golden pheasant, vain, and gay of plumage, and quite unworthy the devotion of a young adoring heart, but he was comparatively harmless and he would never consciously commit a serious injury. But Rupert de Valois was a hawk, or in more courtly phrase, a falcon, with the hawk-nature none the less, always poised to

swoop upon his prey. He would never hesitate to take by force what he could not win by artifice or persuasion. Innocence would be powerless before such talons.

On a certain golden August evening Grace was seated near the windmill-crowned redoubt, the very spot whence Aubrey had watched her race with Flying Swallow on that April afternoon four months before. Again, as on that day, the lake before her was changing from sapphire to topaz in the sinking sun, and the shadows were beginning to touch with dusky fingers the little settlement across the shining strait. But she took no note of time, and the golden afterglow upon the water had merged into the restless flicker of moonbeams before she rose to return to the cabin.

Pensively she made her way among the grim earthworks where she and Aubrey had walked as lovers in the sweet April weather. She was too near the fort to fear hostile Indians, and she did not hasten. She was thinking how she and Philip had watched just such a golden moonrise from the knoll beyond the cabin on the night of that strange portent of the ring of flame.

Suddenly there emerged from behind the angle of a bastion a figure that was not an Indian, though to Grace far more repellent. Rupert de Valois, with his white-and-violet uniform, his perfumed lace, and jewelled orders, was a vivid symbol of voluptuous France in the heart of this wilderness. As he confronted her in the deepening twilight, the hawk-look in his face was so intense that, instinctively, she recoiled, looking wildly round her for a way of escape,

but there was nothing behind her save the darkening lake. He approached with his slow, exultant smile, while she stood motionless, seemingly as powerless to move as a bird entrapped by a snake.

"Your coyness becomes you, pretty one," he said in his dangerously soft voice; "your coyness becomes you, but let's dispense with it for once.—Nay, never look around you, fair one, the woods cannot appreciate those sweet glances. Turn them rather upon me. No, no, I swear you shall not pass till you pay toll! Toll of kisses, lady mine!"

Another moment and his arms were round her, and she was struggling vainly to free herself from that softly perfumed contact.

Suddenly the hawk became aware of a tall figure gliding toward him like a spectre, and instantly he released his prey. Red Plume, the Abnaki, stood before them.

With a little cry the girl sprang to the side of her deliverer. The Indian's cold regard was riveted upon the Frenchman's mocking face. Not a word was spoken. The three might have been the actors in a pantomime.

Behind Red Plume appeared Alan Stuart. There was no need to tell him the meaning of the scene. His keen glance flashed from one to the other, noting instantly the look of fear with which his daughter shrunk to the side of the Indian.

He turned fiercely upon de Valois: "Explain the meaning of this affair, Monsieur le Duc, or your high rank shall not protect you!"

Rupert de Valois laughed nonchalantly: "Can you

blame us poor mortals for being bedazzled by such loveliness?—Blame rather the beauty which allures! Does one condemn the moth that seeks the candle?—Nay, rather, the candle which attracts."

The mocking curl of the mouth with which this was said kindled to flame the Scotsman's smouldering wrath. "Liar!" he cried. "Do not try to hoodwink Alan Stuart! You may cozen others with your fine French graces, but I know you for what you are! Libertine and devil! How dare you seek the New World to hunt your prey? Thus do I denounce and defy you!"

And with the words he struck the Frenchman heavily across the mouth.

Rupert de Valois reeled beneath the blow. His hand sprang to his rapier. Then, recovering himself, he relinquished his grasp upon the weapon, wiped the blood from his mouth and smiled, a curious distorted smile.

"I ask your pardon, Monsieur le Major, if in aught I offend you. You took too seriously what I meant but for a jest.—But let that pass! I grieve to have occasioned your fair daughter a moment of distress, and thus I implore her forgiveness."

So saying he dropped to one knee, and, bending, kissed the hand of the shrinking girl. But for all its seeming graciousness, there was something so sinister about the act that Grace could not repress a shudder.

An uneventful week followed an episode destined to be fraught with such tragic significance. Yet a deep foreboding weighed upon the heart of Grace with the weight of chains.

One moonless evening early in September an officer of the regiment La Reine appeared at the cabin with a message from the Duke de Valois, asking Major Stuart to meet him an hour later at Fort St. Frédéric. "That I may still further express my regret for a certain unfortunate occurrence," so the missive ran, "and may assure you of my great desire to retain your friendship."

Alan Stuart read the contents twice, hesitated for a moment, then turned to the messenger, saying, "Tell the Duc de Valois I will meet him at the hour he assigns."

When the man had gone, Grace, who had been spinning by the fire, came hurriedly to her father's side, and laid beseeching hands upon his arm.

"O father! father! Do not answer this summons!—There is danger threatening! I feel it!—O father, let us leave this place and flee to the English settlements!"

"The English! The bitter enemies against whom I fought! I would not take life from their hands! Are you clean mad? There is no danger. What dares Rupert de Valois do to one who has so long served France? Am I not under the protection of the Marquis de Montcalm himself? Let others fear this crouching leopard of de Valois! I defy him! See, already he is sheathing his claws. It is for amity he will sue to-night!"

She clasped her hands imploringly. "O father, father, be persuaded—do not go!—What avails the power of Montcalm against that of a cousin of the King of France?"

In the midst of her entreaty the cabin door opened noiselessly, and Red Plume, the Abnaki, entered unobserved. He stood a moment, a silent and impassive listener, then he stole to the side of Alan Stuart.

"Brother," he said, a solemn hand upraised, "brother, in the voice of White Dawn speaks the voice of the Great Spirit. Let not the fireside miss thee from thy place to-night. If the leopard lie in wait, walk not into ambush."

And gliding to the door, he disappeared as noiselessly as he had entered.

Alan Stuart seemed to hesitate as if re-weighing his decision in the balances of choice. Then, with the gesture of one defying fate, he wrapped himself in his plaid and caught up his blue bonnet. Grace saw the settled purpose in his face and knew herself powerless to combat it.

She crossed the room and took down from its place above the mantel her father's broadsword.

"At least, do not go unarmed," she said with a little shudder, and put it in his hands. "There is no moon. It will be very dark."

"I shall return long before midnight. But do not wait for me. Do you and Dorette to bed. Good-bye, child."

The tenderness in his voice bespoke the old-time intimacy. The heart of his daughter leaped to meet it.

"Father, father," she cried, and clung to him as if the parting were to be for life instead of for an evening.

He paused. "And, lass, there is something I should have told you before. Philip Aubrey is at Albany alive

and well.—A French prisoner, just exchanged, saw him there.—Lass, I cursed him in the battle, but I repent me now. The lad is not to blame for being kin to him whose life I took. Since you love each other I will no longer withhold my consent. When he returns I will that you should wed him. Perhaps then the curse may be lifted—the shadow may depart from my soul."

He stopped and kissed her—a kiss that closed for ever the rift between them.

A little strangling sob escaped her lips. She clung to him almost fiercely. "Father, father, for God's sake do not go!"

But he put aside her protesting hands, and strode out into the night.

He had been gone scarcely five minutes when the outer-door again opened to admit Red Plume. His gaze swept the cabin with instant understanding. "The Mountain Oak has gone?" was less an interrogation than an assertion.

"I go also." And he vanished into the darkness.

Despite her father's injunction, Grace kept restless vigil, for to her sleep was impossible. Again and again she started up, fancying she heard her father's footfall in whispering wind or rustling leaf. But the lingering hours wore on till midnight, and no step rewarded her anxious waiting. Grace could no longer sit inactive; she began to pace distractedly from end to end of the little cabin, her feverish imagination painting hideous pictures upon the sable background of her dread.

The interminable night dragged by, and he did not come. At dawn, sick with fear confirmed, she set out for the fort in search of him. At the threshold she met Flying Swallow. Red Plume had not returned.

At the fort her terrified inquiries elicited nothing. De Valois himself denied having seen Alan Stuart. He had waited, he said, till midnight in expectation of the Scotsman's coming, and in vain. He would order searching-parties to be sent out at once, and he made no doubt the missing would soon be found. Perhaps a slight mishap——

But the Abnaki felt assured that behind this calm, courtly masque the devil within the man sat leering.

That same afternoon Flying Swallow, following a trail that led southward from the cabin into a dense forest, found, on the edge of a little clearing, the body of Red Plume, covered with wounds and surrounded by the signs of a furious struggle. When he had assured himself that no life remained, Flying Swallow rose and stood motionless, scarcely seeming to breathe, looking mutely down upon his father's body.

At last he moved slowly away with bowed head, his eyes still searching the ground. Suddenly he stooped, parted the heavy branches that overhung the clearing, and picked up the *pieces of a broken broadsword.*

In Flying Swallow's mind conviction deepened: Red Plume had met his death in vain defence of Alan Stuart. For his friend's sake this Algonquin Nemesis had foregone entire vengeance upon France.

Floating Cloud had been given Christian burial in the little chapel at St. Frédéric. Far different was the burial of the outcast chieftain. Flying Swallow bore

his father's body far into the forest, and there made the tree-rocked grave, where the winds could sing a fitting requiem above the sleeping sachem. When all was done he stood with upraised arms beside the body, his face lifted toward the sun, breathing a mute farewell.

XIV

THE LOTUS FLOWER

PHILIP AUBREY, seated upon the wide front porch of an old Albany mansion, gazed out with languid interest upon the military stir and tumult of the quaint Dutch town. From where he sat he could look far up the broad, grass-bordered street —past market-place, guard-house, town-hall, and churches—to the fort-crowned hill, and as far down as the river, spired with many masts. On both sides of this thoroughfare rose picturesque houses of Holland brick, gable-ends to the street, each standing majestically apart in a prim square of garden and greensward, adorned by an ancient well-sweep, and shadowed by a mighty tree.

But Aubrey's eyes, though they noted these details, did not linger on them. They dwelt, rather, upon the radiant figure seated opposite him—a figure in flowered silk, with powdered hair piled high upon a shapely head.

Cicely Van Dersen, only daughter of a wealthy Dutch fur-trader, looked haughtily out upon her little world from the pinnacle of her assured position as the belle and heiress of Albany.

After lying for weeks severely wounded at the home of his kinsmen, the Gilchrists, Aubrey had recovered

sufficiently to be brought to Albany. Cicely Van Dersen, catching sight of his pale, handsome face amid the flotsam of Abercrombie's wrecked campaign, had persuaded her stolid Dutch father—who bore the usurping English no great love—to allow the young officer to be brought to their home to recuperate. Accordingly, Aubrey found himself installed as guest in the hospitable Dutch mansion, supplied with every luxury which the time and place could procure—and surrounded by the constant ministrations of the mistress of the mansion—fair Cicely.

Gradually Aubrey, out of all the young gallants, civil and military, who elbowed each other for her favour, came to be looked upon as Cicely's accepted cavalier. In justice to Aubrey, be it said, that while he did nothing to dissipate this impression, he, at least, did nothing definite to create it. He simply allowed himself to drift pleasantly on this stream of ease, heedless whither it might carry him.

Since coming to Albany he had tried to blot out the past five months as if they had never been. The very memory of Lord Howe was painful to him; it seemed to rebuke his shallowness anew.

Whenever he thought of Grace, he thought of her under the shadow of their parting at Sabbath-Day Point: when she had seemed to reproach him for his lack of gravity, his light-hearted confidence of victory. During the long weeks of his recovery he had brooded sullenly upon her aloofness; she had shrunk with virginal shyness from the very touch of his hand. Even at parting she had denied him a single kiss. How was he ever to win her if she kept him thus forever at

arm's length? Let others sue for the favour of this coy Puritan beauty—he would not!

Cicely was not so coy. She did not begrudge him a light touch of the hand, and once, when he had bent over her with some whispered pleasantry, she had tilted her pretty face so invitingly that the temptation to snatch a kiss was more than flesh and blood could resist.

And yet he was not absolutely faithless, but simply too shallow and untried to estimate at its true value the love Grace had bestowed upon him. Here was the appeal of a coquette and woman of the world, opposed to a child in artlessness and innocence. His masculine vanity was soothed and flattered by Cicely's evident admiration. Yet Cicely's was, after all, mere surface beauty. He admired her as if she were a lovely picture or a brilliant jewel, but the emotion went no deeper—it did not stir the heart.

Nevertheless, thought Aubrey, it was pleasant to tarry a while at this inn of harmless dalliance, and drain a last sweet stirrup-cup before remounting for the ride of life. Thus musing, he raised his eyes, and as they met Cicely's he saw a sudden blush creep up and lose itself among her powdered curls. The lotus flower was very fair in the plucking, for all it was the flower of forgetfulness. The sweet seductiveness of Cicely's presence was like a narcotic lulling into slumber his finer nature. He should have shrunk from it as if it had, indeed, been opium, but instead he welcomed it, and, laughing, drank the poison of the poppies.

He leaned forward; his hand closed over Cicely's.

She turned her face to him. Another moment and their lips had met.

Flying Swallow hid from Grace the knowledge of his father's death. When he returned from his search her frightened eyes questioned him, but his impassive face told her nothing. Despair could not at once unclasp the clinging fingers of her hope. Alan Stuart and Red Plume might have been taken captive by a hostile band of Indians or Rangers. Surely word would soon come from Albany or Fort Edward of their safety. Yet the days wore on, and the silence of suspense remained unbroken.

Dorette divided her time between clamorous weeping for Alan Stuart and flirtations with the young French subalterns, the former occupation arousing the speechless but intense disgust of Flying Swallow, who possessed the aboriginal contempt for tears. What he could understand was the silent white-faced grief of the girl who would sit for hours gazing out over the lake, as if asking Heaven an answer to the cruel enigma of her father's fate.

More than Alan Stuart's own life had been involved in his disobedience of Red Plume's warning. Entwined with it was the life of Red Plume, his friend and defender, and the fate of the two who would be left orphans by their fathers' death.

De Valois seemed to have declared a brief truce; it was sure to be brief, for the cause of it,—Marseille d'Ardenne's beneficent planet,—would inevitably be eclipsed by the evil star of de Valois.

It never occurred to Grace to connect her father's

disappearance with de Valois' behaviour toward herself. She only felt her helplessness a hundred-fold more deeply now this strong bulwark was withdrawn. Yet, though the mightiest rampart had been shattered, a breastwork still remained in her defence,—the ceaseless vigilance of Flying Swallow. From the hour of Alan Stuart's disappearance he never quitted the cabin save when Grace quitted it; he slept within the outer door. Often, rising startled in the night, Grace saw his tall figure, pacing, musket in hand, in the moonlight without.

When she sat, gazing lakeward, from the windmill-crowned redoubt, Flying Swallow crouched beside her, never speaking unless she spoke,—a perfect model for vigilance in bronze. Ever her thoughts recurred with cruel insistence to the chasm that had yawned between her father and herself after her journey to Lake George. How worse than futile that journey had been! The death of Lord Howe, the noble lives that had been dashed out like quenched torches. But above all, her mind dwelt with pitiful constancy on Philip Aubrey; her longing stretched out to him imploring hands. Why was he thus silent? If he were, indeed, at Albany, as her father's parting words had told her, why did he not come to her as he had promised, or at least send some message, some token?

It might well have seemed to Alan Stuart—could he have lived to know it—a poetic justice that his daughter, deserted by the nephew of the man he had murdered—should expiate his crime.

One evening when anguish had become unbearable, Grace, sitting alone in the moon-whitened cabin, while

Flying Swallow paced without, dropped her head upon her hands, and began to sob uncontrollably. Feeling long repressed now found utterance. "O Philip, Philip," she whispered, "come back! come back!" Conscious at last of a gaze upon her, she lifted her head from her hands. Flying Swallow was standing in the doorway, regarding her with strange intensity. But as she looked at him silently, powerless to speak, he turned and disappeared without a word.

A little later, as she sat on the shadowed threshold of the cabin, the pent-up yearning of her heart found outlet in words.

"Flying Swallow," she said to the young Abnaki, as he stood beside her in the moonlight, "Flying Swallow, I can bear suspense no longer. Will you go to Albany and seek my father?—It may be he is ill—too ill to send me word. And it may be——"

Her voice broke, and she put her hand to her throat as if to stifle a cry. The shadowed beauty of her face was suddenly more that of woman than child. Flying Swallow answered its appeal:

"White Dawn, if you ask it, I go, but who will guard while I am going if the black hawk swoop?"

"Father Caron will protect me. If this Duc de Valois fears naught else, he fears the power of the church! With Father Caron I shall be safe."

"I go," said Flying Swallow.

That same evening Aubrey and Cicely stood together on the vine-clad porch flooded now by the full radiance of the harvest moon. Suddenly, without any volition of his, his thoughts, rebellious vagrants, transported

him to Fort St. Frédéric: the harvest moon became the yellow moon of April; the autumn-coloured leaves were buds again; for asters there were violets; the shaft of candle-light from the window was red flame; and the figure in the porch's shadow wore no longer satin, but fringed deerskin; the high-heeled slippers were beaded moccasins; the powdered curls had changed to braided gold; blue eyes of coquetry to child-like eyes of brown. He saw the lovely rounded throat that pearls had never circled; the pretty sun-kissed fingers that had never known a ring; the fair, warm skin unmarred by patches; the hair whose chestnut gold had never been dimmed by powder.

Then, as swiftly as it had come, the picture vanished. It was Cicely, the proud, the artful, the capricious, who tapped impatient feet on the moon-chequered floor. The maid of Carillon had been but a lovely vision of the night. And the contrast smote him: before the unadorned simplicity of this daughter of the wilderness the powder and silk and gems of the Albany heiress seemed suddenly so poor and paltry. He scarcely heard Cicely's petulant voice rebuking him for his silence. That other voice, with music in its tones, was speaking. What was Cicely to him? In his inmost soul he knew he cared nothing for her—he knew that his heart was back with the beautiful girl in deerskin whose eyes had first met his that April morning at the Fort of the Chiming Bells.

XV

THE ACCOLADE

ALL that evening the vision of Grace held sway in Aubrey's mind, drowning out Cicely as the sunlight drowns the moon. But by morning his mood had shifted. Cicely's star was dominant once more.

With the dawn a heavy storm had risen. Cicely and her guest could hear it beating violently against the diamond-shaped panes of the quaint Dutch parlour. Cicely, dimpled chin in hand, was buried in a quandary. Aubrey increasingly puzzled her. Was he really in love with her or not? He was too young and handsome, she reflected sagely, not to have played with hearts ere now.

She took a rose from a vase and began to twist it with idle fingers. From beneath her lashes she stole a glance or two at Aubrey. He, too, sat idle, playing with his scabbard. His handsome features, their pallor emphasized by his scarlet uniform, were thrown into becoming contrast against the dark background of a great elbow-chair.

"You have pricked your fingers," exclaimed Aubrey. "They are too pretty fingers to be bleeding. Give me the rose. I will keep it safe for you."

Cicely blushed and tossed him the rose. "So my

heart is not bleeding 'tis no consequence. Fingers are a small matter."

A significant pause ensued—broken only by the clamour of the storm at door and casement. Aubrey put the rose in his coat.

"But tell me, Philip," Cicely presently asked demurely, "were you ever in love before? Be truthful now, and confess," and she shook a pretty finger of warning.

Aubrey gave a restless laugh. Trivial as it seemed, the question had taken him unawares. For once his gay flow of speech failed him. With an effort he regained composure. He leaned forward and took her hand, saying, "Do *you* need to ask me that?"

Before Cicely could reply, a loud knock rang through the house. Both started violently. Aubrey half-rose.

"Why are you so alarmed?" said Cicely sharply. "The servant will answer it."

She was impressed with the idea that this knock had some strange connection with their conversation.

Aubrey, not heeding her, sprang up and stood listening. He heard the great outer door swing open, heard the servant answer a question asked in a curiously low-pitched voice. He could wait no longer. At a bound he crossed the hall, pushing the servant aside. Then, with a start, he recoiled. On the threshold stood Flying Swallow.

With his wild black hair tossed dripping about his face, and his deerskin garments torn and rain-soaked, he had the seeming of a wind-blown leaf,—a frail thing in itself,—but with all the fury of the storm behind it. The only movement about him was the movement of

the wind that stirred his hair and dress. He himself stood motionless, his eyes stern and unwavering, fixed on the face of the man in the doorway.

From the day of Aubrey's coming to Carillon, Flying Swallow had cherished toward him the mute antagonism of his race. Instinctively he had recognized in the stranger the shallowness and lack of stability to which the eyes of love had been blind. And he had been compelled to see this man win the heart of his foster-sister as carelessly as he might pluck a flower. During his lonely journey to Albany, Flying Swallow had brooded bitterly over the possibility that Aubrey might toss aside the flower as carelessly as he had plucked it.

Rightly reading Grace's unspoken wish, he had gone unswervingly to the recreant, determined that the latter's reception of his tidings should be the touchstone of his loyalty. Much as he hated Aubrey, the Indian in his devotion would not have dreamed of injuring him so long as he remained true to Grace. That allegiance was to be the protecting talisman; the moment that allegiance faltered, the knife of Flying Swallow would find the apostate out.

Now, as he stood on the doorstep facing the man he hated, there needed but a breath to fan his smouldering distrust to dangerous flame.

Aubrey made no sign of recognition, and the Indian's passionless face betrayed nothing. In curt, sententious speech, Flying Swallow delivered his message; and all the while his eyes were riveted on Aubrey to watch its effect.

There was a stir in the hall behind him, and the

young officer turned to find Cicely standing at his elbow. How much of the Indian's message had she heard, he wondered? Here was a predicament. He had, of course, never mentioned Grace to Cicely. It would be very unpleasant to explain the situation now. Aubrey saw the advantage of a lie and was tempted by it. It would be so easy to pretend that the tidings were of an official nature. Cicely, in all likelihood, could not have heard much.

Whatever his faults, Aubrey did not number among them cowardice. He never dreamed of fearing the Indian at his elbow. Yet his life had never so trembled in the balance. Temptation beckoned. Aubrey stood wavering. Flying Swallow's hand tightened upon the knife at his belt. Then suddenly it seemed to Aubrey as if a sword had touched his shoulder; as if a voice had spoken in his ear.

"Should you ever be untrue to her, Aubrey,—untrue in thought or word or deed—my spirit will not let you rest. . . . My purpose is too strong to turn aside for death. . . . Living or dying, I will protect her."

It was a mystic accolade: Aubrey's face changed subtilely, losing its look of wavering, of juggling with conscience,—changed so unmistakably, that Flying Swallow's hold upon the knife relaxed. His unconscious victim stood reprieved. Aubrey would never know that death had all but touched him, or that the soul of one accounted dead had struck its hand aside. He only knew that his mind, in that moment of hesitation, had leaped the months to that last night at Sabbath-Day Point, when Lord Howe and he had lain

together on the bearskin; and his friend had uttered that solemn warning.

The thought of Lord Howe was like a sword conferring knighthood, an accolade of honour winning him from baseness. Yet even thrilling from that accolade, he could not bring himself to an open straightening of the tangle in which he had involved himself. The web of deceit he had spun was too intricate to be quickly unravelled, and he was not brave enough to cut its meshes by a frank avowal. Drifting with the stream was not so easy after all; it involved pulling upstream later against the opposing current.

He spoke to Flying Swallow. "Return in an hour and I will have a letter for you." And without a word to Cicely, he turned back to the room they had quitted.

Seated, pen in hand, at Cicely's writing-table, Aubrey faced again the struggle with his baser self. He considered that his courage at Carillon and the wound he had received had entitled him to at least temporary rest and comfort. He did not relish the idea of setting off through a dangerous wilderness on a quixotic search for a man who had cursed him and whom he most thoroughly hated, at the behest of a girl who had twice refused to marry him when he asked her,—nay, had even refused him a single kiss at parting.

Half-an-hour later he rose from the writing-table, and finding Cicely, put into her hand a letter, asking that it be given to the messenger upon his return. This done, he left the house, and she saw him disappear up the street, walking with bowed head through the driving storm.

Left alone, Cicely examined the letter. It was sealed but not addressed, affording no clue to its destination. She turned it over in her hands, pondering perplexedly. Could she have opened it without breaking the seal she would have done so, but that was out of the question. There was some romance behind all this secrecy—what it was she was determined to find out. Her pretty brows contracted.—Wait—she would question the Indian on his return. She would discover what it was that had changed Aubrey so suddenly, making him thus ignore her.

When, a little later, the servant, looking scornfully askance, again admitted Flying Swallow, Cicely put pride aside and went to meet the Indian.

No stronger contrast could have been found than Flying Swallow in his dripping deerskin and Cicely in her flowered satin;—the waif and outlaw of the wilderness, and the spoiled and courted beauty;—the wind-blown leaf, contrasted with the hot-house orchid.

Yet a wild pride marked Flying Swallow's bearing that did not falter before Cicely's look of scorn. His eyes, fixed unwaveringly on her as they had been on Aubrey, missed no detail, noting even that the rose at her bosom was a scarlet twin to that he had seen on Aubrey's coat.

Cicely spoke imperiously: "Who is this person for whom you carry messages?"

"Why does the demoiselle ask that?" Flying Swallow, owing to Grace's teaching, spoke excellent English, marked by a picturesque French accent.

Cicely stamped her slippered foot. "How dare you question me, you wretch of an Indian!" Her tone

was the tone she would have used to a dog. "Have I not a right to know?"

"Then know." A strange repressed fierceness flamed through his stoicism. "Know that White Dawn,—she whom le capitaine pleases to forget—is my sister!"

"Your sister!" cried Cicely scornfully. She felt a curious relief. Flying Swallow's words had conjured up a picture of an Indian girl in deerskin and moccasins. Her rival was not, then, very formidable. She had seen many Indian girls, some of them beautiful, but never one whom for a single moment she would fear as a rival.

Flying Swallow was too terribly in earnest to dream that his words could be misinterpreted. And Cicely was not womanly enough to care or question concerning the fate of this girl whom Aubrey had loved and cast aside. She was conscious only of her own triumph, for she felt with a cruel certainty of power that Aubrey was hers by a double bond. She knew the pitiful pay of a captain. If her beauty could not hold him, her riches could.

She laughed exultantly as she faced the Indian. "You came for a letter, did you not?—Well, you can go away again, for there is no letter. Captain Aubrey has seen fit to change his mind." Then, as Flying Swallow's gaze swept darkly past her, "I tell you he is not here—he is safe from you.—Go—do you hear me, or I will have them set the dogs upon you!"

Flying Swallow's gaze swept back to her with unspeakable scorn. Disdainful fine lady though she was, the haughty colour flamed into her face at that look.

"The demoiselle is very proud," said the Algonquin, "but know that her beauty is as a faded leaf to a blooming bough beside my sister!"

He was gone, and the door closed behind his soundless footsteps. Cicely, half-amused, half-indignant, at his parting words, stood considering. Doubtless Aubrey had wooed this Algonquin girl, perhaps even, in a rash moment, promised to marry her, and accordingly this Indian, her brother, was pursuing him with vengeance. She must warn Aubrey if she could, which meant if she could without endangering herself. When she had destroyed the letter entrusted to her, she had never dreamt of this exigency. She had simply been determined to sunder whatever ties linked Aubrey to this earlier love. She dismissed the matter finally with a careless laugh.

Meantime Philip Aubrey, fighting his way against the driving storm with thoughts as turbulent, had paused before the little English church, then, yielding to impulse, entered and seated himself in one of the corner pews. The morning service had begun. The rector, the Rev. John Ogilvie, was reading the epistle: "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain."

As the words fell from the minister's lips, a strange thrill of remorse ran through Aubrey's soul.

"By the *grace* of *God* I am what I am——" Grace had saved him from a prisoner's fate, and this was her reward:—to be cast aside like a forgotten flower. "The grace . . . bestowed . . . in vain." Her love, her loyalty, her service, thus requited. The dagger of remorse struck deep. He drew from his breast an oak-

leaf, a faded leaf, but he pressed it to his lips. As he did so a crimson rose fell from his coat to the floor, and he let it lie where it had fallen. He sank to his knees in the dim old pew, and bowed his head upon his arms. The accolade, bestowed by spirit hands, was not in vain.

XVI

THE FUGITIVES

DESPITE his hatred of Aubrey, Flying Swallow did not return to the Van Dersen mansion in pursuit of him. Great as was his desire for vengeance, a greater exigency overshadowed it. Vengeance must wait a future day. Having sought in vain at Albany for Alan Stuart, the Indian plunged again into the wilderness upon the homeward trail.

At St. Frédéric, Grace watched the days go by in a trance of dread, through which Rupert de Valois walked like a demon. Her fear of him—the latent womanhood stirring in her—had grown to a horror. She knew too well that Father Caron's power was her only shield. Should that be withdrawn she would be utterly defenceless. From the day of Flying Swallow's departure she and Dorette had dwelt under the protection of the good priest in the little chapel at St. Frédéric.

But Rupert de Valois' malignant influence was undermining even this strong tower. Father Caron received one morning an order recalling him to France. He was not for a moment deceived: behind the apparently innocent order the hand of de Valois was plainly discernible. A righteous rage possessed the good priest. Yet he knew that it would be worse than futile to resist or accuse. He must submit in silence.

But on the day of Flying Swallow's return to St. Frédéric, Father Caron was stricken with a mortal illness. From the first he recognized the face of death, and he called Grace to his bedside.

"Child," he said gently, "I am soon to go, but it is a higher power than the Duc de Valois that calls me hence. O my daughter, if I—unworthy shepherd that I am—might but gather you—my little stray lamb—into the fold of the true sheep!"

A look of pain clouded the clear child-eyes. "O father, for your sake I could wish myself a Catholic, but, O father, to my ancestors I owe a debt—for two centuries they kept their faith inviolate. Shall I guard the treasure they bequeathed to me with less constancy?—O dear father, do not ask this thing of me, for I cannot grant it!"

The tears sprang to her eyes. She lifted his weak hand and pressed it silently.

The priest's gentle look rested upon her like a benediction. "God will be with you, my daughter. Whether of my fold or no, you are of Christ's dear lambs. Do not fear this evil man. God will raise up a defence for you when I am gone." He sighed as he continued, "And Flying Swallow,—he is but a slender bow where your father was the strong broadsword—yet the arrow may be no less sure than the blade.—I would my hands might rest on him in baptism, but 'tis not to be. I have pleaded long in vain. Perhaps some other worthier than I may win him,—another hand may sign the cross upon his brow. He is too true a soul to perish in the dark. Now, dear child, go, it may be I may sleep and dream of Heaven."

Silently, Grace obeyed him. Her heart was numb with the pain of repeated blows. The fate of Red Plume and her father; the approaching death of the belovèd priest, and added to these the knowledge that Aubrey no longer loved her. For Flying Swallow had sullenly disclosed the result of his journey to Albany, and Grace had accepted it unquestioningly. She now regarded Aubrey as the betrothed of Cicely Van Dersen. The Dutch heiress was beautiful, she knew, for Flying Swallow had grudgingly admitted it, "though not of flower-beauty such as yours, White Dawn," he had added, "it was like a doll that is painted and set up to look at." But Grace never dreamed of challenging the claims of her unknown rival.

On the night of Father Caron's death, Flying Swallow found Grace sitting by the lakeside in the moonlight. She turned her head as he approached, but she did not speak, nor did any change come over her face. But, Indian-like, he needed no words to tell him of the deep despair that looked from every feature. His answer to that unconsciously imploring gaze was to lay his rough bronzed hand protectingly upon the slim white hand lying outstretched upon the log. That touch was sufficient answer. She drew a sharp breath of relief like a frightened child assured of safety.

No word was spoken. Flying Swallow, now resolved, moved noiselessly away.

At the entrance to the fort he met a figure emerging —a brilliant figure in white-and-violet. Instinctively, both men paused, facing each other as they had faced each other in the wood at their first meeting. There was the same defiance in the look—the same challenge

passed between the primeval man and the courtier. Intense and contemptuous as was the nobleman's pride, the Indian's superb disdain surpassed it. No Roman emperor—no world-conqueror—could have been more haughty than this outcast and despised Algonquin.

A moment they confronted each other thus, then de Valois spoke in a voice choked with rage:

"Look you, fellow, I have had enough of your insolence. I suffer no interference in my designs. Your claim on fair Mademoiselle Grace—whatever it is—ends now. If you dare inflict on her a moment longer the insult of your presence you will repent it sorely. You dog, your life will not be worth a sou if you attempt to meddle further in my concerns."

He spoke between set teeth, and his hand touched his sword-hilt menacingly.

The faintest shade of a contemptuous smile flickered over the Indian's features. He deigned not one word in answer. Wrapped in mute disdain as in a mantle, he strode silently away leaving de Valois glaring after him.

Flying Swallow found Grace where he had left her, seated upon the log in the faint moonlight. This time she turned her head at his light footstep, and the ghost of hope was in her eyes as she read the look of purpose in his own. These two—alike exiles and orphans—had been cast into a common doom. They could look only to each other for succour and protection.

Noiselessly, Flying Swallow unfolded his plan. Flight alone remained to them—instant flight—there could be no delay.

They must flee to the English settlements, where the

power of de Valois could not reach. The nearest was Fort Edward beyond St. Sacrement, but that way was barred, for Flying Swallow knew that a war-party of French and Indians was roaming all that region. Their only other refuge was Fort Dummer—a rude block-house on the Connecticut—the farthest northern out-post of Massachusetts, and to reach it they would be compelled to cross the Wilderness, as the intervening land was called. Pursuit was certain, but with several hours' start of their enemies, their chance of ultimate escape was fair—and it was their only chance!

The moon was yet young; it would set soon after midnight. By two o'clock it would be dark enough to elude the sentries.

So they separated for the final preparations—Grace returning to the cabin on the bay, Flying Swallow to his father's wigwam for an extra musket and powder-horn. The citadel of St. Frédéric was ablaze with lights as they passed it; Rupert de Valois was holding revel there; while, within the dark walls of the chapel, Father Caron, his gentle enemy, lay forever at peace. For a brief night, perhaps, the dove was safe from the falcon. With the dawn she and her mate, the young eagle, would have spread their wings in flight.

In the deep darkness that follows moonset, Grace and Flying Swallow launched their frail canoe upon the waveless bosom of Bulwagga. Not a breath stirred the October midnight. The call of the sentries from the ramparts of St. Frédéric carried down to them with startling clearness. They moved as silently as the shadows of which they seemed a part. The gliding craft might have been a ghostly barque, and the

dipping paddles plied by spirit-hands, for any sound that reached the ear. Noiseless as a leaf, the fugitives were gone; the prow of their vessel stirred the lake into faint ripples and that was all.

The shore-line blended into the shadowy dimness of the land. The sentries on St. Frédéric were audible no longer. An awesome stillness wrapped the water like a drifting mist.

They had traversed some miles in silence when Flying Swallow suddenly ceased paddling and signalled Grace to do the same. Then, while the canoe drifted, he listened intently for any token of pursuit. But not the ghost of a sound carried across the water. A touch of awe was mingled with the fear in the soul of the girl who knelt motionless on the bosom of the bay. For here, in this primeval world, the mystic words of the creation seemed again fulfilled: "And the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters." The awe had not lifted from her soul when, at Flying Swallow's reassurance, she let her poised paddle fall, and the fugitives resumed their flight.

Dawn had come. A grey scarf, rose-embroidered, was flung across the bosom of the sky. St. Frédéric lay many miles behind. Bulwagga Bay had widened to the open lake, its rosy waters pearl-capped by the freshening wind. But the fugitives made no pause. Every moment was too precious to be wasted.

Their immediate destination was the Rivière au Loutre,—in Indian, Wonakakatuk,—in English, the Otter. This stream, at its source, led to the Wantasticook or

West River, which in turn joined the Connecticut at the point where Fort Dummer stood,—a trail known of old as the Indian Road.

As their canoe sped across the widening waters, golden now beneath the sunrise, Flying Swallow, to the rhythmic dip of the paddles, repeated in the Abnaki tongue to the maiden Grace the story he had so often told to the child Grace—the story of the coming of the great discoverer to this beautiful lake.

To Grace the oft-told story glowed a hundred-fold more vividly, now that she traversed the very pathway Champlain's keel had furrowed. Before her eyes rose the picture: the slender procession of canoes, filled with painted Hurons and Adirondacks,—in their midst the armour-sheathed figure of Champlain—alert, eager, poised for adventure and discovery. How often she had heard from Flying Swallow's lips of that battle at Pointe de la Couronne, between the Mohawks and the war-party of Champlain; and how the fatal echoes of the Frenchman's arquebuse estranged the Iroquois from France forever and waked a savage vengeance that for a century-and-a-half had known no slumber.

Thus, with tale and reminiscence, the fugitives beguiled the hours, while the canoe flew like a hunted deer toward its covert at the Otter.

The goal came into sight at last. The western shore began to lift itself in frowning palisades, transformed by autumn into a flaming tapestry that rose to meet the October blue. The canoe turned eastward toward the opposite shore, where, amid dark alders, the feathery sprays of water-willows traced the course of the Otter to its hidden mouth. As the canoe crept

to cover, Grace dropped her paddle, flinging weary arms above her head, and a sigh that was half a sob escaped her lips.

Meantime, at Pointe de la Couronne, Rupert de Valois and a band of seven hundred French and Indians were embarking in pursuit.

XVII

WHITE DAWN

AS the canoe glided wraith-like up the shadowed windings of the Otter, Grace, for the first moment since the flight, drew a breath of freedom. True, she knew pursuit to be inevitable, but now that they were out beneath the open sky—escaped from under the baleful shadow of Fort St. Frédéric—a rapture of hope sustained her, born of her nearness to the heart of nature. Every passing breeze, every drifting leaf, seemed to breathe a sympathy for the fugitives. The thought of hardship did not frighten her; she was half-an-Indian in her kinship with the wilderness, in her love for the primeval. She had learned from Flying Swallow to run as fleetly as a fawn; to shoot unerringly with bow and musket; and had grown to womanhood endowed with the health and strength of the forest life—a dowry more precious than gold and gems.

There now began for the fugitives days of strange delight—a sweet oasis set in the cruel desert of their destiny,—halcyon days midway between storms past and to come. Behind them lay pursuit, before them uncertain refuge, yet, between, peace lowered golden barriers and within the pale they dwelt secure.

When the passing days failed to reveal any actual trace of their pursuers, the fugitives seemed to forget

that they were pursued—or rather, that fear was banished to the far background of their consciousness.

Indian-summer—that wizard season of the year—had laid its touch of magic upon them as upon all the world—that season, brief, sad, and unutterably tender, the last sweet pause of summer on the threshold of departure. The crimson arras of the woodbine, the scarlet banners of the maple, the gold and russet pennons of the sumac, spread a resplendent canopy above their path; a path lit by the yellow sunshine of the goldenrod, and starred by the mist of the purple daisies. Autumn kindled bright torches in the forest, and each deciduous tree unfurled a flaming ensign of retreating summer.

As they journeyed in their birch canoe along the beautiful river, Grace grew almost light-hearted. Laughing, she dipped her fingers in the water and tossed a shower of silver drops at Flying Swallow, and stooped to drink from the soft cup of her hands. A mysterious change had come over her—Grace Stuart, the Scottish maiden, had merged into White Dawn, the Algonquin girl, a strange reversal of the balance between Celtic ancestry and Indian environment. In casting aside the fetters of fear, she seemed also to have cast aside the civilization of which she was the child; while the latent love of the wild and the untrammelled, long nurtured by her life, had claimed its own. The dryad had burst the confining bark; the nymph had risen from the fountain; the naiad from her stream.

And this change Flying Swallow had instantly recog-

nized. "You are wholly 'White Dawn' now," he told her, with his grave smile, and once he had added "*The swallow flies toward the dawn.*" She seemed strangely nearer to him in this new guise. Whatever had been alien had fallen from her like the bark from the dryad. She had re-clothed herself in the thought and feeling of his race. She spoke oftenest in Abnaki, as if it was the only speech for these woodlands. The very name Abnaki signified "people of the dawn." And she was "White Dawn."

For him, too, it was Indian-summer—a season of delight as sweet as it was fleeting. With their arrival at the settlements, civilization would claim his beautiful foster-sister and freeze her sweet spontaneous way into a mould of custom and convention.

He had not a drop of white blood in his veins. The white man's world had no attraction for him. His glimpse of civilization at Albany had repelled him utterly—he saw only its shallowness, its insincerity. He loathed the very thought of crowded roofs and clamorous city streets. He loved the sweep of the winds, the gleam of the stars, the flight of migratory birds, in a world beyond the white man's law. For him the lure of the wilderness was greater by far than that of the Lorelei for the voyagers of the Rhine;—the lure of the pathless woods, and the uncharted waters, of the streams that had never mirrored the white man's passing, and all the vast and virgin world that had never answered to his voice, and had never been stained by his touch. No chain of the white man's forging had ever fettered his free spirit—save for one sweet bond. The white man's stars did not draw him—save

for one white star. And that star would soon be quenched to him forever.

He was tempted to leave the trail to the settlements and plunge into the wilderness with White Dawn.

As they walked along the bank in one of their brief disembarkings, White Dawn tossed a handful of coloured leaves into the air and they fluttered down and lighted on her head and breast and shoulders like gaudy butterflies. Flying Swallow sighed. The winter of despair would follow on this sweet Indian-summer of his life as surely as the crimson leaves that strewed their pathway would soon be buried deep in the white sepulchres of the snow. But for nature there awaited the resurrection of bud and blossom; for him there would be no spring. When the dawn faded out of his life there would be only midnight remaining; when the white flower of his love had been uprooted, the soil would never know bloom again.

But for a brief space yet that flower was his and he clutched it to him with a desperate joy. Even the bitter hate he felt for Aubrey was lulled for a time by this sweet influence. This was Flying Swallow's hour. For Aubrey's gentler, weaker nature—springtime, bright and alluring—violets and verdure; for Flying Swallow—Indian-summer, whose softness veiled the cruelty of coming winter much as his love veiled the savagery of his own wild nature. For the white man, springtime; for the Algonquin, Indian-summer—a season fraught with the pathos of a dying race. Through this Indian-summer world they roved like inmates of Paradise.

The land through which they journeyed was a "land

of beautiful valleys and field fertile in corn," as Champlain had called it, "the Promised Land," as its first pioneer, Samuel Robinson, was yet to name it, a very Eden,—yet to bear a name descriptive of its verdure "Vermont." But in those days it was known only as the "Fair Wilderness"; and its beauty served only savage purposes: its bright streams formed a highway leading from the forts upon the lake to the heart of New England, a liquid thoroughfare traversed by ruthless enemies.

But, however black the purpose to which man put it, the land kept a stainless beauty. Breathed upon by autumn it became fairyland. Dark fir and shadowy hemlock stood staidly among the gorgeous company of oaks and maples, like Quakers in a rainbow throng of courtiers. Slim birches gleamed along the banks like the white limbs of naiads bathing in the pool. Here and there a flaming maple stooped to view her resplendent likeness in the stream like a pretty maid coquetting with her image; here and there a crimson vine, escaping from restraint like a gay bacchanal, trailed its garland of mock-roses in the water as an offering to the river-god below. The fugitives floated between two worlds —the real and the reflected, and both a glory.

So they fared through this beautiful wilderness in the springtime of their lives, in the sunset of the year.

When rest and food became imperative, they disembarked, kindled a tiny fire on the bank and ate their woodland fare: venison or partridge or wild-turkey, the fruit of Flying Swallow's bow; cakes of corn-meal baked in the embers, and water, cold and crystal-clear, tasting sweeter in its gourd-goblet than any fabled

Through this Indian-summer world they roved like inmates of Paradise

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nectar. There seemed a magic even in the rudest tasks; in the gathering of fuel for the fire, in the drawing of water from the stream, and they laughed over them like children. And children in a sense they were in this Arcadian world—children in their nearness to the heart of their common mother. They had the unconscious grace and playfulness of fauns.

And on these days followed nights of passionless calm; when the white moon rose upon a world entranced, when a spell seemed woven over all the earth, and even the brown leaf underfoot whispered of fairies. Then they bivouaced in some tiny glade when Flying Swallow made for White Dawn a bed of evergreen boughs, sweeter with the crushed odours of the balsam than any Arabian perfumes. She would curl herself up in her plaid on this delicious couch, and sleep like a tired faun, while Flying Swallow, musket on knee, watched by the fire, and smoked the senhalenac or dried sumac leaves, beloved of the Abnakis.

Sometimes they gathered round a fire of pine cones that burned with a resinous golden flame; and Flying Swallow, with the eloquence of his people, told White Dawn the legends of his race; how Glooskap, the creator of the world, whose messengers were loons and whose dogs were wolves, made man from an ash-tree; how the saucy Indians, who, when Glooskap warned them of the great flood, only laughed derisively, and shook their rattles, were changed by him into rattlesnakes who to this day still dance and shake their rattles when they see a man; how the moose were once tall as pines and the squirrels as large as wolves.

He told her the story of Tumilkoontano, or the

Broken Wing; how the Wind-Bird, or storm-sagamore, raises the wind by flapping his wings; how one time it was so stormy that the Indians could not fish, and a young Indian, seeing the bird on an island flapping his wings, resolved to outwit the wind-god. So he offered to carry the bird to the mainland, and on the way,—apparently by accident,—let him fall and broke one of his wings. So there was a calm till the wing was healed.

Flying Swallow told her also of the endless feud of Iroquois and Algonquin—of the People of the Long House and their cruel wars, and Grace remembered with a shudder her terror as a child of twelve when the Mohawks attacked Fort Frédéric, and Flying Swallow, a lad of fifteen, had defended her at the risk of his life.

And as she listened, the firelight glimmered redly over the exquisite face and figure, which by all the laws of nature and of life should have had the Old World setting of satin and gems; of fountain and greensward and stately castle; and had instead the savage New World setting of wampum and deerskin, of shadowed forest, and primeval nature.

Sometimes, when he paused, she would sing very softly a song that he had taught her, an Algonquin song, to be sung only beneath stars, and called "The Song of the Stars." Strange, indeed, was it to hear from those sweet lips that weird melody and wildly poetic language:

"We are the stars which sing,
We sing with our light;
We are the birds of fire;
We fly over the sky.

Our light is a voice;
We make a road for spirits,
For the spirits to pass over!
We look down on the mountains,
This is the Song of the Stars."

But when the moon had risen to mid-heaven, and the camp-fire was dying low, White Dawn faded like a forgotten dream, and in her stead, like a fairy transformed, stood Grace Stuart, sorrowing, yearning, loving, with a heart whose aching would not be stilled. And ever in the red embers she saw two faces: Aubrey, as he had parted from her, light-hearted, laughing, debonair, and Lord Howe, grave, serene, and noble. And one slept the sleep that should know no waking this side the grave, and the other—O far more bitter! —the other had ceased to love her.

And so with the inexorable shadow—the shadow of destiny—upon her face, she would sit, her great eyes fixed upon the distance, never moving, seeming hardly to breathe; and motionless, rapt as she, Flying Swallow watched her, till the two might have been sculptured figures symbolic of devotion and despair.

Once, when this mood was upon her, she spoke to him across the camp-fire: "Your sister, Floating Cloud—how beautiful she was! And how happy her fate! Death is better than life in these days!"

"But for you, White Dawn—you that are young and like a blossom!"

She struck her hands together softly. "What use is youth and life to be hunted thus!—I have no home on earth, I know not my father's fate;—and behind are those that follow.—It is better to die and be at peace!"

A sorrowful silence fell between them. At last Grace spoke. "You and I, Flying Swallow, are the last of our race.—When we die there will be none left.—We must cling together to the end. The shadow is upon us both."

The magnetic bond between them was complete. She saw him through the softening light of sympathy which touched into pardoning tenderness his fierce nature, as the outlines of a rugged landscape become softened when touched by the warm radiance of a harvest sun.

One evening, when they had journeyed more than half of the distance to Fort Dummer, Grace and Flying Swallow stood looking out from a hill-top over the moonlit valley. It was a breathless autumn night. The stars shone like jewels between the now leafless boughs that were outlined with the delicate tracery of seaweed against the sky. There was no sound save the rustle of wind-stirred leaf—soft murmurous airs, gentle as summer's, and delusively sweet.

Her hand rested lightly on his arm as she leaned forward, her gaze following his. Suddenly, from the dusky woods below them a light appeared—the flicker of a camp-fire. Grace and Flying Swallow beheld it at the same moment. The girl uttered no word, but he felt her fingers tighten upon his arm, as her whole body grew instantly tense with fear.

"Iroquois?" she whispered in his ear.

He shook his head. "No, Abnaki, and with them the Awahnock" (Frenchman).

He heard the sharp intake of her breath. "I had rather it had been the Iroquois."

"That would have meant certain death, White Dawn."

"Yes, *death*," she said.

With noiseless speed they returned to the place of bivouac, quenched their fire, and re-embarked. When they were again gliding swiftly along the moonlit Wantasticook, Grace spoke in a whisper:

"How closely they have followed us. O God! I never dreamed."

"I knew that they were near," he answered, "there was no need to tell you."

"And I so light-hearted, thinking we were safe.—O God! The camp-fires of the Algonquins—your people, Flying Swallow!"

"My people, yet my enemies."

Flying Swallow had virtually sacrificed to his devotion to his foster-sister all chance of reconciliation with his father's people. Henceforth the Abnakis were his deadliest enemies and must ever remain his enemies as long as they were leagued with France. Capture would mean to him not only the deadly vengeance of de Valois, but the savage hatred of his countrymen.

The dream of peace had dissolved in terror; there was left but the hideous reality. Hour after hour they pushed on, driving the canoe ahead at full speed. Their paddles rose and fell in perfect unison, for the girl's stroke, though lacking the Indian's in firmness, yet had his dexterity. Moonlight merged into dawn, and day in turn into dusk and they had hardly paused.

At last the girl began to yield to exhaustion. She felt sleep steal upon her, and roused herself with an

effort, compelling herself to pursue her task, but again drowsiness began to overpower her. She turned almost fiercely to Flying Swallow:

"Shake me—strike me, if need be,—but keep me awake at any cost!"

"I shall never strike you," he answered, and his deep voice was strangely tender. "I shall never strike you, White Dawn, though it should cost my life."

Dark though it was she smiled, forgetting he could not see her, and, turning, laid a hand upon his shoulder. "I might have known that it were vain to ask you that, my brother!"

And without another word she bent again to the paddle.

But at last irresistible exhaustion claimed her; she felt her senses yielding to it without being able to resist. Slowly the tired head drooped forward, the paddle slipped idly from the aching little hands, and Flying Swallow, leaning quickly toward her, caught the wearily relaxing figure in his arms, and laid it gently in the bottom of the canoe. Then resuming his paddle he sent the frail craft plunging ahead under a powerful stroke. For this Algonquin panther was lithe and straight and slim of body—a winged Mercury for beauty and for strength.

Thus desperately the fugitives pursued their flight. They pushed their way through tangled thickets, where briars caught and tore their clothing: they waded through marshes and forded streams too shallow for the canoe. Fortunately, Grace's health and strength were perfect—the product of an untrammelled life—and her young endurance almost matched his own.

For behind them, goading them onward, trod the demon, capture. With every hour their pursuers pressed them closer.

At last, in the afternoon of a late October day, the fugitives, from the edge of the forest, saw before them the broad reaches of the Connecticut, and, rising from its banks, the rude outlines of Fort Dummer, their haven of hope. The sudden relief of tension was too great; Grace burst into wild laughter, a laughter half-sobs.

XVIII

THE DEFENCE OF THE BLOCKHOUSE

IN the wildness of her joy, Grace would have run forward into the clearing about the fort, had not Flying Swallow drawn her back, crying "Beware, White Dawn, they may take us for enemies and fire." Accordingly, Grace drew out her handkerchief and Flying Swallow waved it above his head in token of amity. An instant later a white flag appeared at one of the loopholes. Thus assured of a friendly reception, the fugitives quickly crossed the open space to the stockade.

Fort Dummer, the first permanent settlement in what is now Vermont—on the site of the present town of Brattleboro—had been built in 1724 by the "Province of Massachusetts Bay," for whose lieutenant-governor it was named—to protect the western frontiers of that colony and sister-provinces from the constant menace of French and Indian.

It was constructed of hewn logs, placed horizontally within a "stockade of square timbers twelve feet in length set upright in the ground." Within this enclosure, against the walls of the blockhouse, stood the so-called "province-houses" inhabited by the garrison, and strongly defencible, in case the enemy broke through the stockade. The artillery consisted of four patereros—"light pieces of cannon mounted on

swivels, and sometimes charged with nails or stones," and a "Great Gun," called into service only to give alarm or proclaim good tidings.

The garrison at present consisted of about thirty men, with their wives and children, a scant fifty in all. The commandant, Colonel Nehemiah Endicott, a brave soldier and a fervent minister, descended from that proud Endicott who, a century earlier, had torn the red cross of England from the flag of Massachusetts, had inherited the stern virtues of his ancestor in undiminished measure.

As he stood now, eyeing the refugees with a severe regard, the stamp of the Puritan was writ large upon him. He listened in grave silence to the story which Grace, her appealing eyes upon his face, related breathlessly. The impression which the fugitives made upon him was not wholly favourable. His eyes had been instantly arrested by the crucifix at Grace's throat, and he watched it frowningly as she spoke.

But when, the pitiful story ended, Grace, lifting clasped hands, cried beseechingly, "O sir, for Christ's sake protect us," it was the warm heart of the man within the cold exterior that answered her, "You have asked in Christ's name, and in Christ's name I promise you protection. No enemy shall touch you—though he be the foul fiend himself—so long as Fort Dummer stands in your defence."

She gave a little sob of gratitude, and would have kissed his hand had not a sharp movement on his part prevented her.

The news that a large war-party of French and Indians were on their way to Fort Dummer, and would

undoubtedly attack it, were the fugitives refused to them, roused the little garrison like a tocsin. Yet, although the danger was imminent, and strong men listened with grave eyes, and mothers, pale-faced, clasped their children closer, no dissenting voice was raised to oppose Endicott in his determination to protect the helpless. The fugitives, standing in the great inner room of the fort, looked from face to face of its defenders, and read there sympathy and a warm response to their appeal.

But Endicott was not one to delay. Hardly had his decision been made before he began his preparation to withstand attack. The Great Gun was fired to summon aid; kegs of powder and balls were brought from the cellar beneath the fort; muskets and "patereros" were loaded; buckets were filled with water in case the enemy attempted to fire the blockhouse. The defenders were assigned their places at the loopholes, while to the women was left the task of reloading the muskets and passing them up to the men at their posts.

But with the early October dusk fierce cries rose from the forest—the savage challenge of de Valois' Algonquin allies, carrying an involuntary shudder to many a brave heart within the blockhouse.

It was still light enough to show plainly the white-uniformed figure of the Duke himself as he advanced, under a flag of truce, accompanied by his officers, toward the gate of the stockade, where Endicott and his lieutenants awaited him. A greater contrast could hardly have been presented than this gorgeous French cavalier, insolent, insouciant, and the sober-clad Puritan, grave, controlled, determined. With contemptu-

ous assurance, Rupert de Valois demanded the immediate surrender of the fugitives; and Endicott, unmoved, made a curt refusal. There followed an instant's silence. Challenged and challenger looked, in the deepening dusk, into each other's eyes.

Then de Valois, discovering no sign of yielding in the calm countenance of his opponent, cried with an angry oath, "Fool, I will have these runaways though I batter your walls into splinters! Beware how you oppose me," turned and strode back to the edge of the clearing, where his mingled band was assembled.

It was now evident to Endicott that attack was inevitable;—that there could be no opportunity for temporizing. Since he had learned the number of his assailants, he had realized how greatly the odds were against him, and he turned back into the stockade with grave face but unshaken purpose. The falling night made it improbable that de Valois would attack the fort at once; he would in all likelihood wait for daylight. But a few hours' respite was all for which the besieged could hope.

Within the blockhouse, as night came on, the brave little garrison, their outward defences strengthened, fortified their spirits for the coming fight. Endicott offered prayer, and they all joined in it, kneeling. Afterwards the men gathered apart, discussing the impending conflict, while the women and children huddled together in a corner in awed silence. Among these sat Grace, her dress of fringed and beaded deerskin contrasting curiously with the homespun and folded kerchiefs of her neighbours, one with them in fate, and yet

strangely an alien, as any woodland creature would have been.

Near her stood Flying Swallow with folded arms, motionless as an image. Presently she saw Endicott approach and accost him.

"Fellow, are you not a Christian? Why did you not kneel with the rest in prayer? Answer me!" he demanded, for Flying Swallow had turned on him a look of intense scorn.

With a troubled face, Grace rose, and reluctantly explained to the emphatic parson that Flying Swallow was not a Christian, and that all her uttermost efforts to make him one had been in vain.

"One day I feel that he will yield and grant me that great wish of my heart, because he bears me so great a love. You see he is my foster-brother."

And she looked with eyes of sweet beseeching into the grim face of the ecclesiastic.

Endicott had listened to her impatiently. He knew she was a Presbyterian, because she had told him so, but she wore a crucifix and he had seen her make the sign of the cross when she knelt, and both these things were an offence to his nostrils.

"A strange kind of Presbyterian," he muttered to himself, "already half a Romanist. Idolatry pure and simple. Foster-brother, forsooth! These Scots are mad beings. They would adopt a Hottentot were nothing else at hand." Then, aloud to Grace, "An excellent companion for a virtuous maiden—this heathen savage—predestined to perdition as he is."

Grace turned on him in sudden fury. "How dare you speak of him thus! There is no Christian more

loyal or more devoted. If his fate be hell, then I never wish to go to heaven. Who made you the arbiter of souls? It is God who is Judge, not you."

For all her sweetness there was fierce blood in her—a latent spark easily stirred to flame by intolerance. Endicott was both amazed and appalled at the suddenness with which she had carried the eternal destiny of Flying Swallow to a Higher Court; and all his power of logic and store of knowledge did not furnish him with an answer. He decided to abstain from further discussion of the fate of Flying Swallow's soul.

Grace returned sorrowfully to the little group she had quitted. Endicott had touched rudely on a sensitive chord. She had long striven vainly, as had Father Caron before her, to convert Flying Swallow. But greatly as she had influenced him in other ways, this one thing he had denied her with dogged persistency. Red Plume had bequeathed to him as a deathless legacy this bitter hatred of the white man's faith.

So in Grace's heart the scene had set a second painful chord to vibrating. The other was her longing for her father. On the wilderness trail hope had fluttered in her heart like a bird in its native air. But here—on the borderland of civilization—outside the magic pale—hope suddenly drooped and languished like a bird imprisoned—never to spread its wings again. Crouching there in the firelight, she bowed her face in her hands and wept—not for fear of de Valois, but for the light-hearted days of the old wilderness trail.

The inmates of the blockhouse saw Flying Swallow pause and touch, as lightly as a falling leaf, the beautiful grief-bowed head. Endicott, watching the little

pantomime, realized that though sundered by race and religion the two had much in common. Strangers in a strange land, they clung to each other, one in sympathy and devotion. Recalling the fate of Eunice Williams, the Deerfield captive who became the wife of an Indian, he felt convinced that Grace, in spite of all, would yet marry the Abnaki.

The hours of respite slipped ruthlessly by like the sands of a failing life, and the October dawn looked down upon Fort Dummer. With the first light, the garrison saw a movement in the motley band encamped at the forest's edge. Instantly the alarm was sounded and the defenders sprang to their places at the loopholes just as the first ranks of their assailants were seen advancing. On they came, the French shouts of " Vive le Roi " and " Vive de Valois " blending strangely with the savage cries of the Algonquins. They were scarcely half-way across the clearing when a line of flame leaped from the blockhouse and sent the oncomers scattering in confusion before the rain of bullets, nails, and stones.

But de Valois, with angry oaths, rallied his men, and they again advanced. A second volley met them, but by this time they had gained the shelter of the stockade and were hewing at it with their axes, while some returned the fire of the besieged.

The position of the garrison was indeed precarious. Their advantage as defenders was more than counterbalanced by the superior numbers of their assailants, and the therefore redoubled danger that the latter might break through the stockade. And even if this could be prevented by the skilled marksmanship of

the garrison, there lurked ever the deadly possibility lest—were the siege protracted—their ammunition fail them.

But their fears were hidden beneath a calm exterior. Endicott, his dark ministerial dress contrasted with the scarlet and buckskin around him, stood erect and unwavering, stern image of the devoted Puritan. Vainly had Grace implored him to allow her to take her place beside Flying Swallow at the loopholes. Compelled to remain in the background with the non-combatants, she yet bore her part unflinchingly, loading the muskets and passing them up to Flying Swallow.

When there came a momentary lull in the firing—besieged and besiegers pausing to take breath—Grace would turn with unfailing courage to comfort the white-faced women and sobbing children by her side. One, a young matron scarcely twenty-five, clutching a year-old baby to her breast, clung to Grace with pitiful helplessness.

"O God!" she moaned,—"will they kill us all, do you think?—Will they murder my baby too?—For myself I am not afraid, but oh—if harm come to him, and his father away in the wilderness!"

And the girl answered: "Oh, no, no, surely they would not dare to harm the helpless.—If vengeance fall on any, it will fall on Flying Swallow and on me!" Yet, answering so, her heart misgave her. Would the vengeance of de Valois be so easily sated?

As the assault increased in fury, she ran to Endicott through the wreathing musket-smoke, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"For God's sake do not let so many lives be perilled for the sake of two! But ask them—" her voice shook for a moment, then steadied, "ask them if I will not suffice—if Flying Swallow may not go free."

Endicott shook his head. "That would be useless. It is you they want, but they will have the Indian too."

Her hand fell from his arm, and with a little moan she turned again to her task of loading muskets.

Fiercely and more fiercely raged the fight. Man after man dropped from his place at the loopholes wounded and dying. The floor became slippery with blood and strewn with bodies. But Grace and Flying Swallow went unscathed, though on the girl's lips quivered a wild prayer for death. Better, a thousand times, for them both that they should meet death, as Lord Howe had met it, from the enemies' muskets, than to be given up into the hands of de Valois.

Night darkened at last. Bleeding, powder-stained, exhausted, the defenders slept where they fell. They had thus far held the assailants at the stockade, but this was greatly weakened and must inevitably yield. Twice had the blockhouse been set on fire by burning arrows, and the flames had been quenched at great cost. Repeatedly had Grace gone to Endicott, beseeching him to give up her and Flying Swallow, and he had stubbornly refused.

Exhausted, Grace had fallen into feverish slumber, her head resting against the shoulder of her young neighbour, who, with her baby, had also sunk to sleep. A wild confusion wakened her, and, dazed, she started up. The livid light of dawn was in the place. Men

were staggering to and fro, loading their muskets with desperate haste. She saw Flying Swallow divide the last contents from his powder-horn with a man in tattered scarlet. The truth flashed on her;—the ammunition was failing.

In the same moment there was a cry from a man at the nearest loophole,—a cry of such utter despair that it brought the girl to his side. "O God! look." He pointed with a powder-blackened arm from which the torn sleeve fell in shreds. "O God! look." Grace, following the pointing arm, saw the stockade everywhere giving away. A devilish yell rose from the Algonquins—a yell that was echoed by a groan from the blockhouse. Then the stockade crashed inward, and over it sprang the invaders—howling like demons.

Fort Dummer was doomed. For the devoted garrison surrender or massacre were the only alternatives. Heavy blows began to rain upon the massive oaken doors of the blockhouse. Grace's horror-widened eyes sought Endicott. He was directing a further strengthening of the gates. She sprang to him like a very Dian, and her voice rang out above the hideous uproar.

"For Christ's sake give us up before they quench their vengeance in the lives of all. If you do not, God will visit you for innocent blood. Oh, I am grateful! grateful! but to resist is useless. Surrender while there yet is time!"

Slowly Endicott yielded.

"Child, you are right," he said, "further resistance would be madness. I will order a signal displayed at once."

A moment later the white flag of surrender fluttered from the walls of the blockhouse. Grace watched it with a sinking heart, for to her that flag of peace was an ensign of agony—a black foreshadowing of future woe.

XIX

PRISONERS OF WAR

WITH the raising of the white flag the enemy's firing ceased and was followed by a silence more ominous than the uproar which preceded it. The little garrison listened, mute with apprehension, for the hideous war-whoop to shatter the stillness with its signal of massacre. But the hush remained unbroken, and Endicott gave orders to open the gates that he might treat with de Valois for terms of peace.

His foot was upon the threshold when a hand touched his arm. Grace's eyes were looking at him out of a pale, set face. She tried to speak, but at first the words would not come. Then she said with an effort:

"For God's sake, make him promise not to harm Flying Swallow; make him swear it upon the cross. For he hates him and he will kill him if he can."

Endicott bent his head in acquiescence, and went out.

Within the ruined stockade was held the conference between conqueror and conquered. De Valois' arrogance was redoubled, but Endicott showed the same unruffled mien of their earlier meeting. He demanded the protection of his garrison from the Indians, and this de Valois promised, and rather contemptuously agreed to spare the life of Flying Swallow. Endicott felt none too confident of his sincerity, but he was not

in a position to question it. He returned forthwith to communicate the result of the treaty to the garrison. To the mute question in the eyes of Grace he answered: "Yes, he swore on his cross, I believe, but I put no faith in such Popish follies."

He looked at her with something of self-misgiving. He had yielded reluctantly, it is true, to her wish to give herself up for the garrison, but in his secret heart he knew he had been more willing to let her sacrifice herself than he would have been had they been one in mind. Grace, after all, was little more to him than a beautiful barbarian.

To the girl, Endicott's words carried assurance. "You are safe, my brother," she said to Flying Swallow. "The Duke would never dare to break an oath upon the cross."

But Flying Swallow's only answer was an Indian proverb, "'Tis ill to treat with the conquerors.'"

Late that afternoon, almost two days to the hour from the time the fugitives were received into the blockhouse, they were given up to their captors. With tearless eyes, Grace pressed Endicott's hand, whispering broken words of gratitude. She was turning away when the young woman whom she had comforted put her arm about her, and kissed her tenderly upon the forehead.

"May God bless you," she said softly, "for saving my baby."

In the space before the blockhouse the forces of de Valois were drawn up under arms. Out through the heavy gates, scarred by the storm of assault, passed the refugees, two piteous prisoners of war: Flying

Swallow grim with blood and powder, and Grace with torn dress and dishevelled hair and white set face.

Mockingly exultant, de Valois came to meet them. Suddenly, as if awakening from a dreadful dream to a more dreadful reality, Grace recoiled, shrinking close to her foster-brother; and with a swift, fierce movement, instinctive as that of a lioness defending her young, Flying Swallow caught her to him, and she clung to him convulsively, as to the only being who could protect her. His arm encircled her, and her splendid hair, half-unbraided, fell like a golden curtain across his breast. Standing thus, Flying Swallow confronted his enemy with the savage fury of the primeval man defending his mate.

Then, with a supreme attempt at self-possession, Grace sprang from Flying Swallow's clasp and stood, erect and dauntless, facing Rupert de Valois. She even turned toward the Indian with a gesture of protection, saying:

"Remember, Monsieur le Duc, the oath that you have sworn. This man shall go unharmed, whatever fate awaits me."

And still de Valois smiled, that slow, cynical smile, as he looked into the girl's imploring eyes.

It was then that Grace became aware that a man had left the company—a man in a priest's robes, with a calm beneficent face. His eyes had been fixed intently upon the girl as she spoke and now he stepped to the side of de Valois.

"Have no fear, my daughter," Father d'Estournelles said gently, "the Duc will fulfil the oath which binds him."

Thus compelled, de Valois assented, but his manner was not convincing.

That same evening the Duke's war-party and their captives began to retrace the course so lately travelled in mingled fear and rapture by Grace and Flying Swallow. Where their slim canoe had glided, freighted with youth and hope, crept the heavier craft, laden with French soldiery and painted Indians. That had been the dream; this was the awakening.

Even nature shared the captives' mood. A change as cruel as their fortunes had swept the smiling land. The Indian-summer days were gone; the first snow was falling, chill and cheerless, above the shivering hills. The moon had lost its pearly magic, its mysterious lustre, and its shining was but the feeble glimmer of a cold dead world. The very leaves seemed to shudder like the wandering ghosts they were, stripped from their tree of life. They danced as ghosts might dance in the whisper of vagrant wind. Only the stars were unchanged, and they shone in the gloomy heavens like symbols of faith and hope in a shadowed destiny.

No more the magic windings of the Otter—no more the scarlet drift of leaves upon the stream—but a sad, dark river, too sombre to reflect even the leafless boughs that leaned above it. All the world was changed; instead of summer, winter; instead of hope, despair.

So down the altered stream the captives passed with thoughts as dreary as its current, till the Otter gave place to Lake Champlain, its grey, autumnal waters snow-capped by the piercing northern wind.

Upon reaching the lake, the party took their course southward to Pointe de la Couronne, where they made a brief pause for rest and reinforcement before continuing the journey to their ultimate destination. But to Grace, St. Frédéric was no longer a home and refuge; it wore now the grim aspect of a prison.

Some slight alleviation was allowed her in the reunion with Dorette, who rapturously announced to her mistress that she had been chosen by the Duke to attend her at Quebec in the capacity of maid and companion to the future Duchess. But to Grace this news was but a mingled joy: it assured her of the company of Dorette, to whom she was deeply attached, and of whose faithlessness she did not dream; but it also confirmed her fear that she and Flying Swallow were not to be left at the lesser prison of St. Frédéric—where the chance of rescue might await them—but were to be carried captive to Quebec—that rock-bound citadel from which escape was hopeless. Were Aubrey true, —should he return as he had promised—he could not save her now.

On the drear November day that followed their arrival the party re-embarked. Not even Flying Swallow's face was more impassive than that of Grace, as, with a dark cloak hiding her deerskin gown, she took her place in the canoe beside Dorette. With the fading leaves White Dawn had faded. Upon the joyous dryad the bark had closed forever.

Day after day they journeyed along those dreary waters once blue and sun-kissed; between those bare sad shores once radiant and abloom. And in their own lives lay reflected the grey despair of lake and sky.

Westward, beyond the misty foothills of the Adirondacks, rose, far in distance, Wahopartenie (Whiteface) and Tahawas—Wedge that Splits the Sky—(Marcy). Eastward, across the valley, Moseodebewadso,—Mansfield—Moose of Mountains, and the majestic form of Le Lion Couchant, reared their stately heads, snow-crested.

Leaving the Otter behind, the little fleet took its way down the lake, passing, on their left, the Rocher Fendre or Split Rook—Sobapsqua—Cloven Way, as the Abnakis called it, with the mystic serpent coiled upon its face, a place, as Grace had learned from Flying Swallow, held sacred in the unwritten annals of his race. Not many miles northward, where the lake expands to its greatest width, appeared the dark forms of the Isles des Quatre Vents (Four Brothers). Eastward, a stern pointed rock rose abruptly from the water—the dread Wohjahose—The Forbidder—(Rock Dunder)—the guardian spirit of Petowbowk—(Champlain), to whom Flying Swallow had often tossed the customary offering of pounded corn or senhalenac, without which dire misfortune was sure to fall upon the impious.

But now, though the boat drew so near that the ripples it made beat against the rock, the Forbidder received no offering, for Flying Swallow's hands were bound, and Grace saw him repress a shudder at the omen of disobedience.

Grace had protested vainly against Flying Swallow's bonds, for Rupert de Valois had answered: "You are cruel—my sweet one—would you have me invite a knife-thrust in the back? Nay, nay, I have dealt

with Indians long enough to know that they are harmless only with their hands tied, and, ma foi, not always then."

The canoe swept on, unpausing, past the long, dark headland of Quinask (Shelburne Point), to where the eastern shore ascended in gentle undulations—a beauteous spot, whereon, a generation later, should rise a beauteous city—Burlington.

Still on, passing the mouth of the Rivière Ouinouque, known of old as the French River, because, like its sister the Otter, it offered France a highway to New England—across the wide grey bosom of the lake, skirting the Isle de Valeur—(Valcour)—where eighteen years thereafter Arnold fought his gallant though losing fight,—and the smaller Isle de St. Michel (Crab Island), till they entered the deep bay, immortalized half-a-century later as the scene of MacDonough's brilliant victory.

As the canoe approached the western shore, de Valois, seated beside Grace in the bow, pointed out to her a river that joined the lake at this point.

"Do you know its name, fair lady?—No? Then I will tell you. That is St. Amant, river of lovers.—You will hear the Indians call it Sumac—but what know they of love? I blame you not, pretty one, you have had only Indians for lovers—you see I do not count our fickle Captain Aubrey—but now we French have provided you with something better, you still turn that lovely face away from us."

He laughed derisively. "You are cold, you Britons. It is 'honour' with you; it is 'liberty' with us. It is 'friendship' with you; it is 'love' with us. It

would seem you know nothing of love, my cold but beautiful Briton, but ere many days you shall know, for I shall be your teacher, and you shall learn from my lips."

Although the child in her still predominated, she shrank with a shudder from his look and touch. De Valois poured the torrent of his passion into unlistening ears.

So the fleet swept on; rounding Cape Scononton (Cumberland Head) and La Grand Isle, and pausing for the night at Isle la Motte, named for the French officer, Sieur la Motte, a captain of the Carignan regiment, who built there in 1665 a fort dedicated to St. Anne, the mother of the Virgin. Nothing now remained of it but sunken ruins, overgrown with briers, but Grace, remembering Father Caron's reverence for the place, breathed a prayer in his memory as she knelt, shivering, on the site of the little chapel.

The warmth of Indian-summer had been followed by a frost of great severity, and already winter had bound the land in icy chains. At Pointe au Fer, the party left their boats and struck across country to Hochelaga, their way encumbered by the falling snow.

It was then that Grace observed with growing terror the animosity of the Abnakis for their outlawed kinsman, Flying Swallow. From time to time she saw them cast upon him looks of bitter hatred; but now their smouldering hostility flamed out into savage cruelty. They forced him to carry their baggage, first stripping him of his moccasins and of all save his deerskin shirt and breeches. Each with a taunt and a blow

they piled their packs upon his shoulders till his back was bent with them. His arms were tightly bound behind him with deerskin withes. After a day of toiling over the rocky path, his torn feet left a trail of blood upon the snow.

Grace, compelled to ride on horseback beside de Valois, knew nothing of his plight till a halt was made toward evening. Then, dismounting, she came upon him leaning, half-dead with exhaustion, against a tree. Burning with indignation she accosted de Valois.

"Monsieur le Duc!" she demanded, "have you broken your oath thus soon?"

"I promised to spare his life: have I not spared it?" he answered with his mocking smile. "Naught was said, I believe, of punishment for conniving at your escape. I warned him at St. Frédéric what the penalty would be."

"Coward and liar!" she cried, "you are killing him no less surely than if you stabbed him to the heart."

While de Valois stood sneering and carelessly twisting his sword-knot, Father d'Estournelles appeared.

The scene was intensely dramatic: Flying Swallow, a torn and piteous figure, huddled against the tree; Grace, standing bareheaded in the falling snow, accusing eyes upon de Valois, the Duke, insouciant and exultant, and over all the wintry sky and the fast-descending dusk.

Grace turned to the priest imploringly: "For God's sake, father, save this man whom this perjurer seeks to murder."

Father d'Estournelles' benignant gaze swept from the girl's face to the Duke's. Then, ignoring de Valois, he spoke to Flying Swallow's Indian guards: "Unbind this man and take the load from his shoulders. If you again mistreat him—at whosoever bidding—you shall feel the displeasure of the church!"

De Valois did not speak, but he cast upon the Jesuit a look of futile rage. Grace, with a sob of relief, caught the priest's hand and clung to him as to her one protector.

But though Father d'Estournelles had thus raised a shield between Flying Swallow and his fate, Grace knew the danger to be undiminished. And on all the long march to Quebec she strove, with a desperate insistence, to turn Flying Swallow to Christ. To her it was not alone the shadow of death which threatened him, but the shadow of eternal doom. No Jesuit martyr could have yearned and striven more passionately to save a soul than this little daughter of the Calvinists. But all her pleadings were powerless to move this stubborn Abnaki, who owned allegiance neither to Louis of France, nor to George of England, nor to the Christian God, who bowed before one altar only.

On a certain dark November morning an English officer arrived at Fort St. Frédéric under a flag of truce. It was Philip Aubrey, at last repentant, seeking for Grace. He was too late. She and Flying Swallow, the commandant told him, were on their way, as prisoners, to Quebec. And, hearing this, Aubrey shuddered, as Grace had done, remembering how vain was rescue from that rock-walled prison. As he rode

away from St. Frédéric, with head bowed, heavy of soul, to rejoin his regiment at Albany, one thought alone shone clear above the bitter wrack and hurry of remorse: somehow to make atonement for his inconstancy.

XX

"THE BELEAGUERED CITY"

IN the old grey city on the St. Lawrence the months passed—to many, winged, to others, leaden-footed: Winter's icy gates were lifted, Spring entered, treading close upon the trail of Winter, and scattering blossoms where she trod; and Spring grew matronly once more, and yielded her throne to her laughing young sister, Summer.

Not less wonderful was the change that had come to Grace. Through the long winter days of exile and captivity her character had ripened—the lovely child expanding to the lovelier woman. She had been a child in so much. The latent womanhood in her that had stirred under Aubrey's influence had been so shadowy and unformed that she had never been fully aware of it. She had never understood fully why Rupert de Valois' touch seemed to burn her.

But with awakening came revelation;—a revelation that illumined not only Rupert de Valois but his enemy, Flying Swallow. As in the glare of some mighty conflagration, the figure of the Abnaki started into sharp relief. Nothing in Flying Swallow's demeanour had ever made her dream that his feeling toward her was not that of a brother. As volcanic fires lie hid beneath the cold and lifeless lava, so did the austere and passionless bearing of his race conceal the emotion that

flamed beneath the Indian's calm exterior. But suddenly the veil was lifted; the child had become the woman at last. She knew that Flying Swallow loved her; not as a brother, but as a man.

For her this knowledge strengthened the bond between them indissolubly. Hers was too true, too firm a nature, to feel either scorn or exultation at this humble passion. Terribly soon was the touchstone offered to her loyalty for her foster-brother.

During the months that had passed since her coming to Quebec, Rupert de Valois' pursuit of her had never once relaxed. Relentlessly the hawk had hovered above his prey, waiting only the final moment to seize with beak and talons. Father d'Estournelles had been the only barrier between her and destruction. The Duke feared but one thing—the power of the church; and he dared not sweep this priest from his path as he had swept the gentler Father Caron. For Father d'Estournelles had kinsmen high at court who would not brook an insult, and the Jesuit himself was not one to be lightly withstood.

Grace was as much a mystery to the priest as she had been to the Puritan. Gentle and childlike though she was, he succeeded no better with her than he did with the obstinate Flying Swallow, whose only answer to his passionate urgings was a grunt of dissent or more ominous silence. He had encountered that most unbending substance, however seemingly plastic—a Scottish will!

Among the worshippers at Mass in the little church of Notre Dame des Victoires he often noticed a slender kneeling figure, round whose uncovered head the sun-

light made a golden aureole. At the raising of the Host he saw her bow her head as reverently as any Catholic there, and he marvelled.

It was Father d'Estournelles who had forced Rupert de Valois to honour Grace with an offer of marriage—a formality the Duke would have willingly dispensed with. Under this compulsion a marriage-contract had been drawn up and signed by de Valois, and only awaited the signature of Grace to make it binding. But the girl had resolutely resisted all pressure upon her will. Father d'Estournelles himself had told her that his influence over de Valois could not go beyond this point; New France, with the English threatening her every gate, was in too perilous a strait to risk the estrangement of so strong an ally, however profligate.

But one day, hearing that Flying Swallow had again narrowly escaped death at the hands of the Duke's Abnaki allies, Grace, in a moment of terror, had signed the marriage-contract, promising thereby to wed Rupert de Valois on "the day the English shall be repulsed from Quebec, providing the life of one, Flying Swallow, be henceforth safe." It was, for her, a blind game with Fate; she was playing her highest card against an opponent whom she could not trust to play fairly, and who, having won her dearest treasure, might yet violate the bond which held him. The act was one of supreme despair. She could look neither to the past nor to the future: both vistas were closed to her,—the one by painful memories, the other by hideous anticipation.

How utter a change had come over her life!—not alone the change from light to shadow, but the change

from the natural to the artificial, from the wide horizon to the prison-bars.

The very dress cramped and fettered her; the stiff, uncomfortable stays, and narrow, high-heeled slippers were to her body what the life of conventionality and restraint was to her spirit. Her loose dress of deer-skin, and soft pliant moccasins had been symbolic of the free natural life of the wilderness—of the bird on the wing,—of the doe in the forest.

She went to ball and banquet and revel the winter through, at the Duke's command, and the mockery, the shallowness, of it all oppressed her soul. The jewels he had given her weighed upon her heart like iron fetters, but she wore them, as she was henceforth to do greater things, for Flying Swallow's sake.

De Valois had moved her, as all true womanhood is moved, through her passion of pity.

Dorette alone found joy in exile. To her this old grey city was a miniature of Paris, and Paris spelt Paradise to her mirth-loving French soul. What was to her companions thraldom, was to her an ecstasy of freedom. She laughed and danced and flirted to her giddy heart's content, heedless of the disturbing rumours with which Quebec was rife.

These rumours—of a coming enemy—of a threatening siege—suddenly crystallized into certainty on the 21st of June, when the masts of the English fleet became visible off the Island of Orleans just below the city. Vainly had prayers and vows been offered that Heaven might intervene and wreck the English ships as it had wrecked those of Admiral Walker fifty years before. On the 6th of June the last of Wolfe's

fleet had sailed out of Louisbourg harbour, the troops cheering, and the officers drinking to the toast, " British colours on every French fort, post, and garrison in America."

But amid the general jubilance and elation one man stood silent and unmoved. In Philip Aubrey's heart not even hope of victory could wake an answering thrill. Since that day at St. Frédéric, when he had learned of Grace's fate, all the youth and buoyancy had died out of him; and his fellow-officers hardly recognized in this grave, gloomy man the gay responsive comrade they had known. Remorse had smitten deep, piercing the very fibre of his being.

When, at last, the army disembarked before Quebec and he stood on Point Levi and gazed across the narrow band of river to the town scarce a mile away, he felt a mournful exultation at the thought of his nearness to Grace—a prisoner on yonder rock-girt heights —separated from him only by that slender sweep of stream, yet in reality more widely sundered from him than if the whole globe lay between them. For he knew too well that Rupert de Valois would never voluntarily relinquish the treasure that he held, to him who, all too late, had learned its value.

That same day Grace sat for hours at her window overlooking the river, watching the English soldiers on Point Levi planting batteries with which to sweep the town, and questioning with an aching heart whether Aubrey was among them,—Aubrey—who had forgotten her, yet whom she had never ceased to love. For she had no means of knowing whether his regiment, the Royal Americans, was in Wolfe's command,—but

a most unexpected channel of knowledge was about to be opened to her.

Since the signing of the marriage-contract Flying Swallow had been allowed his freedom within the limits of the French lines, but his wanderings had been by no means confined within these boundaries.

Scarcely an hour before he had amazed her by announcing some movement of the English. She had looked at him, incredulous, yet alarmed, for her quick mind had grasped instantly the import of his words. He was in direct communication with the enemy: he was an English spy. But it was not alarm alone which she felt, for mingled with it was a little thrill of triumph: prisoner though she was, she might yet aid General Wolfe in his great enterprise of wresting Canada from France by helping him to take Quebec,—the heart, the very life, of New France.

Yet the beleaguered city seemed impregnable; nature and man had combined to make her so. She sat perched upon her eyry like a wild eaglet, defying any hand to pluck her down. Everywhere she was walled by cliff and height, a New World Gibraltar, with the St. Lawrence at her feet in lieu of the Mediterranean. Palace, church, convent, and hospital clustered along the mighty rock; the green midsummer leafage of the Seminary garden; the towers of the Cathedral; the spires of Ursuline, Recollect, and Jesuit. Higher yet rose the towering peak of Cape Diamond, rimmed with breastwork and parapet, and crowned by the citadel. And everywhere batteries bristled: the Chateau Battery, the Clergy Battery, the Hospital Battery on the frowning rock, and, on the strand below, where the

houses and granaries of the Lower Town huddled beneath the cliff, the Royal, Dauphin's, and Queen's Batteries.

Above Cape Diamond the river ran between steep palisades, inaccessible, or so nearly so, that a handful of men at the top could have held at bay a host; while below Quebec stretched the outposts and encampment of Montcalm, protected by earthworks, from the river St. Charles at the city gates to the Falls of the Montmorenci eight miles distant. Truly Quebec was armed *cap-a-pie* like any knight of old.

Within a week of that day when Flying Swallow had revealed his secret, Grace entrusted him with a note to General Wolfe, disclosing her desire to aid him. She was playing with fire, but what matter—it would be but death at the worst, and death was less terrible than what she dreaded in marriage with de Valois.

Henceforth there passed between the English General at Point Levi and the lovely prisoner at Quebec a constant interchange of plans, maps, and information. General Wolfe found in this unknown ally a daring, intelligence, and adroitness that answered with instant perception to his purpose. Knowing nothing of her save that she was a woman and young as she herself had told him—he marvelled at her statesmanlike grasp of details.

Thus matters stood on a certain midsummer evening, when a great ball was given at the citadel. It was, indeed, a revel in the midst of ruin. Wolfe's batteries on Levi had for weeks past been pouring their rain of fire upon the hapless town, leaving a fearful wake of devastation. But Rupert de Valois, adamant toward

suffering or distress, would have danced on the edge of a crater. He was one of those gay and heartless courtiers,—Bigot, Cadet, and their kind—whose cry was, "after us the deluge!"

Grace had little heart for dancing; moreover, she had promised to meet Flying Swallow that evening on the King's Bastion, where an angle of the wall gave shelter from observation, in order to receive from him some important information. Not daring to disobey de Valois, who had summoned her to the ball, she decided to keep the tryst on the way thither.

Accordingly, when she and Dorette entered the courtyard of the citadel—still deserted, for the hour was early—Grace dispatched the little maid back to the palace on the pretext of a forgotten jewel, and, once alone, concealed herself in the wall until the sentry should have passed.

In the shadow of the King's Bastion, Flying Swallow awaited her coming. She had taught him the white man's lore of the heavens, and he knew by the stars the moment she would come. The night was very still and faintly moonlit. From where he stood he could look far down upon the murky river and across to Point Levi and the Isle d'Orléans, where glimmered the lights of the English camp. But it was not of these he was thinking; instead, his thoughts reverted to the bastion of another fort—a wilderness fort by the waters of Champlain.

He stood again in the shadow of the bastion and watched two figures—the one in beaded deerskin, the other in the scarlet dress of Britain—pass slowly up the slope beyond. . . . Grace and Aubrey: she was

wearing violets in her hair—the violets he had plucked —she who had never worn a flower. . . . The stab of memory went deep.

Then suddenly there was a soft stir and he turned, and Grace stood before him,—not the lovely child of St. Frédéric, nor the White Dawn of the wilderness trail, that gay, mercurial creature, but the maid of the beleaguered city—a woman sweet and calm and tender, strong to suffer and to dare.

Over her satin ball-dress she wore a dark cloak, the hood of which partly covered her face.

The evening had grown sultry, and she presently let the shrouding cloak slip from about her shoulders and stood revealed in the splendour of her pearly satin. Her hair was caught high with a jewelled comb. One curl caressed her neck. Jewels flashed and burned about her throat. Standing thus, the two might fitly have symbolized civilization and savagery,—a meeting of the Old World and the New; her white loveliness and his superb bronze manhood.

All Flying Swallow's native stoicism could not prevent a thrill of exultation as he saw that about her throat—among the gems of de Valois,—she wore the old-time token—the chain of purple wampum, outward symbol of the bond between them.

Flying Swallow seemed to have borrowed for the hour the white man's passion. His breath quickened, his dark face glowed; it seemed as if in another moment he would have caught her in his arms. The scented lace of her sleeve brushed his wrist. Her white radiance overpowered him; her touch and presence swept aside the barriers of race and heritage.

Then, suddenly, as she turned to him, the tension passed, and he was the Indian again, mute, motionless, impassive, held in restraint by the immemorial custom of his race.

With one of her swift graceful movements she seated herself on a jutting edge of the parapet, and with charming naïveté kicked off her high-heeled slippers, exclaiming impatiently, "Oh, how they hurt! I hate them!" and sat swinging her pretty unshod feet.

Then, growing quickly serious, she turned to Flying Swallow, "I came at the very moment, did I not?—See, Vega yonder is just behind the citadel.—Now, give me the papers you have brought.—There is so little time—they are looking for me at the citadel even now."

Flying Swallow cast a stealthy look around him. Then, with noiseless caution, he drew the papers from beneath his deerskin vest, and put them in her hands.

"The plans of le Général Wolfe, White Dawn."

Her breath came quickly, as she took the precious papers and concealed them in her dress. How hazardous the game that she was playing! Yet she was resolved to play it to the last cast of the dice—the dice she tossed with Fate.

"Tell General Wolfe that I will guard these with my life——" The words were suddenly arrested on her lips by a movement from Flying Swallow, who had turned sharply toward the opposite angle of the bastion.

Suddenly he bounded forward and dragged from her place of concealment behind the wall—Dorette.

Grace stood motionless, dumb with a surprise fast

changing to dismay as she began to realize what this might mean.

Dorette, trembling in Flying Swallow's savage grasp, was sobbing out protestations of innocence:

"O mademoiselle! mademoiselle Grace!—I came not to listen—I came to find you, mademoiselle, to take you to the ball at Monsieur le Duc's so express command! O believe me, dear mademoiselle—by the Holy Virgin I swear to you that I heard not one word—not one little word, mademoiselle."

Thus Dorette, looking the while the picture of frightened innocence. But Flying Swallow continued to hold her fast, dearly desiring to wring that pretty white throat of hers, now uttering what to him were so many lies.

But to Grace, Dorette's words rang true; notwithstanding the fact that she had told the little maid to meet her at the citadel, might not Rupert de Valois have insisted on Dorette's coming in search of her? She ordered Flying Swallow to release the trembling girl, and he, albeit reluctantly, obeyed. Dorette, feeling his grasp relax, scurried away like a small scared animal.

"Poor little girl, you frightened her," smiled Grace, "she ran like a frightened rabbit."

"A rabbit," muttered Flying Swallow—"a snake rather—my sister shall see!"

XXI

THE APPEAL

DESPITE her belief in Dorette, Grace was haunted all that evening by a sense of foreboding. Her mind reverted constantly to the scene on the bastion, and she was vividly conscious of the papers that lay hidden in her breast. It almost seemed as if the beating of her heart must betray their presence even above the clamour of the violins, the peal of laughter, and the rhythmic tread of feet.

The old fear for Flying Swallow, from which she had never been wholly free since her journey to St. Sacrement—the fear which had had its birth beside that April camp-fire at St. Frédéric—re-awakened in her now. Why should that weird portent of the ring of flame recur to her amid the stately measures of the dance? It belonged to another land, to another order of existence. Here were the calm light of candles, rich dresses, courtly manners. How incongruous were these visions of flame and torture and a savage vengeance! The shadow—the shadow!

She tried to laugh away this too fanciful mood. "It is because every nerve in me is tense that I see such things," she told herself, and began to jest with her partner of the moment, Marseille d'Ardenne.

Rupert de Valois found her feverishly gay—the effort of the woman to hide a troubled heart. He had

never seen her in this mood before; always she had been the shy sweet maid, with the gravity of those who live close to the heart of nature, and cannot jest at life. This reserve had been a defensive armour to her who wore it; in doffing it she gave her enemy advantage—an opening he was not slow to take.

In one of the pauses of the dance de Valois drew her aside to a window commanding the river where they could look across at the glittering lights on Levi.

"He thinks he has us—le Général Wolfe," mocked de Valois; "the presumption of these English—Mon Dieu, monsieur, we shall see!"

Suddenly all the devil in him leaped forth. He caught her in his arms and held her close.

"Look well at the lights yonder, my sweet one, for not long shall you behold them! Are you foolish enough to think that the English can ever batter down these gates,—can ever scale these heights?——"

The wine he had drunken had inflamed him to a mad abandon. He crushed her to him, kissing her repeatedly. She was powerless to free herself, struggle as she might.

At last he held her off at arm's length, regarding her exultingly. "I will let you go to-night, my pretty one,—but remember you shall be mine forever the day that yonder boasting English leave Quebec defeated."

Shuddering, she wrenched herself from his grasp, not heeding his mocking query, "Are you going to a tryst with your Indian lover?" and flying, wraith-like, through the throng of startled dancers, rushed wildly out into the night.

In her utter distraction she took no notice of a figure standing just without the door—she fled on into the darkness, blind and dumb to all except despair. But Flying Swallow moved stealthily toward the door, paused a moment on the threshold to scan with a sinister gravity the throng within, then slowly disappeared.

In the adjoining room, whence Grace had fled, the Duc de Valois and a number of his fellow-officers of La Reine and Languedoc were carousing noisily. None of them noticed a dark figure pass the window and pause within its shadow. Rupert de Valois stood unsteadily, glass in hand, his face hot with wine, his voice stridently boastful, as he recounted an adventure at St. Frédéric.

"Ma foi! mes amis, the loveliest demoiselle in all New France, ay, or Old France either, but guarded by two grim watch-dogs—her father, a Highland Écossais, and a protégé of his—a very devil of an Indian. Mon Dieu, mes camarades, 'twas not for naught I was bred at Versailles and learned the royal way to clear my path of hindrances. I set a trap for the father of my fair, and parbleu—he fell into it. They are too simple, these New World folk—they do not know our tricks. They believe what one tells them.

"Eh bien!—I appointed him an hour one night to meet me at the fort. There was no moon that night,—a strange coincidence, n'est-ce pas? And we did not meet at the fort; the forest was nearer and more secluded. Our interview was brief. Mon Dieu! how he fought when I and my grenadiers attacked him. We thought to cut him down and end it all—when—

parbleu, the old Abnaki chief burst out of the bushes, and fell on us like twenty fiends.

"Ma foi! a pretty time we had with him;—he covered the Scot with his body and fought like a panther, dealing blows like hail. He was covered with wounds, but—mille tonnerres—even when we struck him down, he shielded the Scot to the last."

De Valois' laugh rang out vauntful, cruelly exultant. "Eh bien! 'twas soon over! They were both dead and we had some scratches of our own, but 'twas a small price to pay for such beauty as hers!—Ye gods—but even then the game was not ended. What does the son of the old chief—another panther like his father—but abduct my fair demoiselle on his own account,—and a fine chase we had of it—across the wilderness to Fort Dummer—and a rousing fight to stir the blood when we arrived, but n'importe, lads,—the maid's mine,—at least she's in my hands—and she'll soon be in my arms if Fortune smiles!

"Drink, mes braves, drink, to the day when these cursèd English shall go down in blood before our guns, to the day when I set sail for France with fair Mademoiselle Grace!"

He laughed again, loudly, defiantly, and lifted the glass to his lips; and his companions echoed his laughter with maudlin elation as they joined in the toast. They did not see the figure lurking within the shadow of the window grow tense with purpose; they did not see the hand steal to the belt as if to tighten upon an invisible knife.

A little later Rupert de Valois, passing out at the citadel door, found Flying Swallow standing statue-

like, with folded arms, beside it. To the Frenchman's wine-befuddled brain stole a suspicion. Had he, then, been overheard? He poured upon the impassive figure a torrent of fierce French curses.

"If you dare—you dog—to repeat what you have heard to Mademoiselle Grace I will hang you from the highest rock upon Cape Diamond. As I killed your viper of a father, so will I rid myself of you, you Indian snake!"

He did but waste threats. Flying Swallow, prisoner and outcast, answered only by a look of sinister scorn, and cursing still, de Valois strode unsteadily away.

For a time the Abnaki stood motionless, gazing after his retreating figure. The conviction that had dawned upon him that September afternoon in the forest at St. Frédéric as he knelt beside his father's lifeless body had been proven now: Alan Stuart had met his death at the hands of Rupert de Valois, and Red Plume, faithful to the last, had vainly given his life for his friend. Flying Swallow breathed a double vow: to avenge the death of his father, and the wrongs and sorrows of the woman he loved.

Heedless of her rich gown and satin slippers, heedless that she was without cloak or covering and that the night air was chill, Grace stumbled blindly on into the shadows. Anyone meeting her might well have taken her for a ghost—for all her youth and beauty—the ghost of a dead happiness, a dead hope. She was not even conscious of the direction she had taken or the path she followed. She had reached a point where

she was alive to nothing save the shame and loathing that overwhelmed her.

When at last she awoke to a sense of her surroundings, she was standing on the edge of a wooded cliff that yawned above the river. Not far distant were the tents of a French outpost, but they were hidden from view by the darkness. In the brief hour or two that had passed since she parted with Flying Swallow, the moon had disappeared behind a western cloud-bank, and a mist was shrouding the St. Lawrence in chill mysterious folds.

How dim was the possibility that the English could ever take Quebec! The city was impregnable against a much greater host than Wolfe could bring. It was hopeless!—hopeless! A pall of misery, a shroud of deep despair, enveloped her as the mist the river. All calmness, all control abandoned her. Wave upon wave of anguish swept in mounting surges across her soul!—Aubrey's desertion of her, her father's fate, the portent overhanging Flying Swallow, her own hideous destiny at the will of de Valois.

Oh, the sweetness, the bitter sweetness, of those spring days at St. Frédéric!—The memory of them beat upon her heart with poignant anguish.

She felt again the breath of the April wind, fragrant with mould and leaf; caught again the scent of the violets which Aubrey's hand had fastened in her hair. . . . She saw the blue shimmer of the lake through the veiling foliage, and the verdure of the young grass her feet were pressing. . . . And Aubrey's arm was stealing round her; his cheek was close to hers,—she awoke to her real surroundings with a

start of pain. . . . She was sinking deeper and deeper into the shadow. . . .

Suddenly, as she leaned there, spent with woe, a dark thought leaped into her mind—a thought so sinister that she shuddered involuntarily. Yet, after a moment, it ceased to appal, it became even a thought to be welcomed as a friend in disguise. It began to master her mind and bend her to its purpose.

She crept to the edge of the cliff and crouched there, staring down into the dimness. At the foot of the jagged precipice the river murmured in the mist. It seemed to call to her, to beckon her with a lure as irresistible as that of the Lorelei for the fated voyagers of the Rhine. With a wild little laugh she dragged herself to the very verge of that dreadful height, and leaned there listening, listening to the song of that beckoning wraith below.

"The river!" she cried. "The river! it calls me! it calls me!"

In this feverishly beautiful creature in her crumpled ball-dress, with the dim gleam of jewels in her hair; with her wide tearless eyes, and the unnatural joy that lit her face, who could have recognized the lovely child who but a year before had journeyed to Lake George and, all unknowing, won the noblest heart among the English host!

Philip Aubrey loved another; and from de Valois there was no escape. The river would be kind. She would wait no longer; she would go. She started forward. . . .

Suddenly a hand seemed to touch her shoulder, to pluck her back from that abyss. She recoiled vio-

lently, a name trembling upon her lips. "Lord Howe! Lord Howe!"

She saw him as she had last seen him in the dusk of that parting at Sabbath-Day Point: the brave, serene blue eyes, the face benignant, tender. Could such a soul, so true, so pure, so noble, perish out of life?

"Lord Howe! Lord Howe! Lord Howe!"

Three times she sobbed the name into the silence. She stretched out her arms into the mist as if to draw him back from that spirit-world. With irresistible force the words of his promise recurred to her, "Think of me as your friend. Living or dying I will be your friend;" and she spoke as to a listening ear.

"You do not lie in any grave, you live, you live, and you can save me. You were my friend on earth—you are my friend in Heaven,—answer me—speak to me, and help me!"

The appeal rang out, the ultimate challenge of life to death. It was followed by a solemn silence. The girl still stood with eager hands outstretched and eyes intent, as if she looked into the face of him she had invoked.

Then her arms fell, her tense attitude relaxed, she drew a tranquil breath. No figure had appeared from out the shrouding mist, no voice had spoken, yet she had been answered. A power,—a spirit—strengthening and consoling, seemed suddenly to enfold her as a mother's arms enfold a frightened child.

An utter revulsion of feeling followed. She looked down on the dark river, shuddering at the thought of taking her life. How weak, how wicked, she had

been! The beckoning river showed itself in its true guise—a demon, not an angel. She sank to her knees and wept, and the blessèd tears brought peace, relieved the overcharged fountains of the heart, made anguish bearable once more. . . . Again the promise had been kept—the promise to remember and protect. . . . That appeal,—the cry of her soul's supreme despair,—had been heard and answered.

XXII

THE FATE OF FLYING SWALLOW

THAT hour on the cliff marked the turning-point in the captivity of Grace Stuart. Before, there had been despair, and a passionate struggle against Fate; afterward, there was peace, and a calm acceptance of whatever destiny might have in store. Hope there was none, but bitterness had gone. In this calming and strengthening of her spirit by another's, even her fear of de Valois was lulled. Indeed, for a time she ceased to think of him; her mind was free to deal with the momentous project to which she had pledged herself: that of aiding Wolfe to take Quebec.

For two days following that memorable evening, Grace saw nothing of Flying Swallow, but the fact roused no wonder, for he was doubtless absent on one of his secret missions to the English camp. On the afternoon of the third day, however, she began to be visited by a sense of misgiving strangely persistent, for which she was at a loss to account.

In this anxious mood she set off down Mountain Street in the hope that she might, perhaps, meet the wanderer himself.

In the two months that had elapsed since the coming of the English, the beautiful grey city had undergone a fearful change. The English batteries had wrought

a cruel havoc in her streets, and many of her buildings lay in ruins. Night and day bombs sailed high above the town on their errand of destruction, filling the air with hideous clamour. Great numbers of her citizens had fled for refuge to the surrounding country; even the nuns of the Ursulines and the Hôtel Dieu had been obliged to retire from their convents beyond the reach of the cannon.

As she wandered slowly down the steep street, eyeing mournfully the scenes of desolation all about her, she beheld Dorette tripping toward her as blithely as if on her way to a fête. Since that encounter on the bastion, Dorette had exhibited a certain constraint toward her mistress which might be interpreted to mean either guilt or—as Grace believed—a natural dread of suspicion.

But whatever its cause, this constraint had now vanished, for Dorette was certainly her elate self again. She was even humming a gay little Normandy air as if such things as siege and danger were non-existent. Yet, at sight of her, Grace felt a curious prescience of evil, born, as it were, out of air.

"I have not seen Flying Swallow for two days," said Grace; "do you know aught of him, Dorette?"

Dorette laughed oddly. "Why should I know of him, mam'selle?" she parried. "Holy Virgin! I am not made guardian to him, I hope!"

There was something beneath the mere sauciness of the retort which struck Grace as significant. She seized Dorette by the shoulder and shook her, as Flying Swallow had done, only more gently.

"You are deceiving me," she cried angrily. "He is in danger and you will not tell me."

Dorette shrank away, still laughing, but with averted eyes.

"Eh bien, mademoiselle, since you hold him—Monsieur le Flying Swallow—in so tender a regard, I will tell you the truth of him. At last has he his deserts. Le Duc de Valois delivered him yesterday to the Abnakis. Mon Dieu, how they love him—his kinsmen!—They will burn him to-day at the stake in their camp yonder."

Grace drew a breath like a gasp. "Merciful God!" she cried.

Dorette rushed on unheeding, "Glad I shall be to be quit of him;—one could not look over one's shoulder that he was not following—your very shadow he was, mam'selle. What matter if he burns here as well as hereafter? He is good for naught save food for flames. Voilà, mademoiselle, no need to be so shocked!—Father d'Estournelles would tell you the same any day."

And Dorette paused for breath, with a half-vexed, half-coaxing air.

Grace stood like one stunned, staring before her with dilating eyes. "The ring of flame!" she cried. "The ring of flame!"

Then suddenly she awoke to action. She turned upon Dorette. "How dare you talk so? Have you no heart at all?—Oh, I could kill you! But tell me, tell me, how far is it to the Abnaki camp?—O God, the time is going—— Quick, how far?"

Dorette shrank beneath the fury of her eyes. "Mon

Dieu, mam'selle,—'tis twelve miles and more.—You are never thinking of going——"

But Grace had not waited to hear the sentence out. Pushing Dorette away, she ran swiftly up the road toward the palace.

Dorette gazed after her for a moment, then, shrugging her shoulders, continued carelessly on her way to the cathedral, gaily indifferent to Flying Swallow's fate! She would have been the last to admit that she was cruel. Of what use was a heathen Abnaki whom even the priests despaired of converting, and whose soul was doomed to endless torment?—If he had been a good Christian, then indeed one might bestir oneself. She shrugged her pretty shoulders despairingly at the caprices of these demoiselles Anglaises who seemed to value the life of a savage as highly as that of the Holy Father of Rome himself.

Yet, although she would not have admitted it, even to herself, there had always been a tinge of coquettish jealousy in Dorette's dislike of Flying Swallow. However gaily she accosted him, however bright a flower she set in her dark hair, the Abnaki never so much as glanced at her. Surely no punishment was too great for such contumely.

With feet terror-winged, Grace reached the palace. In breathless haste she exchanged her velvet dress for one of deerskin, her buckled shoes for moccasins, and with trembling fingers twisted her hair into a single braid. One thought alone dominated her mind: to save Flying Swallow, by whatever means, at whatever cost. All else was in abeyance. It seemed to her a lifetime; it was in reality only a few minutes before, wrapped

in a long cloak, she left the palace, mounted the horse she had ordered saddled, and galloped swiftly out at the St. Charles gate.

As destiny would have it, she knew the countersign, and the sentinels let her pass. Northward, ever northward, she rode at the wildest speed, through the August afternoon already deepening to evening, never pausing, never slacking rein, riding as Fate might ride. Those who passed her on the highway—peasants or soldiery—turned to stare after her—this girl on the foam-flecked horse, who rode with eyes fixed, never swerving to meet theirs, with white face and set lips and a look of frozen horror, as if she gazed upon some fearful sight.

On her right hand flowed the St. Lawrence, guarded by breastworks and batteries, while the fields beside the road were dotted with the tents and wigwams of the French army, interspersed with the whitewashed cottages of Beauport parish.

The sun had sunken, and the moon was high when she reached the Abnaki camp. Half-a-mile distant she halted, and dismounting, fastened her horse to a tree, and went forward on foot. Guided by the camp-fires, she moved cautiously nearer till she found herself on the very outskirts of the encampment; and, noiselessly as an Indian, she circled it thrice before advancing farther.

She was dressed in all points like an Algonquin girl; there was not light enough to betray the whiteness of her skin or the gold gleam of her hair. She made, accordingly, no attempt at concealment, but stepped boldly forward into the red circle of the fires. She

drew, however, a long breath, and loosed the pistol in her belt, for her need of it might soon be great.

Contrary to their usual custom, the Indians had chosen to await the dawn before resuming the torture of their victim; and were devoting the night to sleeping off the effects of their drunken debauch. They lay about, sunk in insensibility, their dusky forms and faces making them seem like enchanted gnomes over which the moon had waved a wand of slumber.

Noiseless as a moonbeam the girl glided past them till in the very centre of the circle she found what she had come to seek. Before her stood a mighty tree, and in its shadow—Flying Swallow.

Naked to the waist, he was rigidly bound to the great oak, his body pierced with many cruel wounds, through which his life was slowly ebbing. His head was drooped forward painfully, but as he beheld her, it was suddenly raised and a transfiguring smile flashed into his pallid face, only to change in a breath to a look of horror as he realized her danger.

"Go! Go!" he implored her. "Oh, if they should find you here, White Dawn!"

She laid a soft compelling hand upon his lips. "For myself I am not afraid. But for you, Flying Swallow —O God, my brother!"

She spoke to him throughout in the Abnaki tongue lest any of the guard should wake and hear.

"I have a horse not far away. Oh, if I but had the strength to help you thither!"

For she saw that the thongs that bound him alone supported Flying Swallow. Were she to cut them, he would fall. Suddenly she realized his weakness, and

her inability to aid him, and a shudder ran through her. The scene at the blockhouse recurred to her, and she remembered how she had clung for protection to that pierced and bleeding breast.

"Go! Go!" his tortured lips again besought her. "I am nothing, White Dawn! Go! Go!"

But she shook her head with a pathetic smile. "I will never leave you, Flying Swallow, unless I go to save you from this dreadful fate. Are you not my brother, the preserver of my life? Should I not be willing to risk my life for you?"

She could see by the moonlight that his lips were parched with thirst. She heard the ripple of a little brook nearby, and stealing softly down to it, made a cup of her hands, and carried water to him. One of the Indian guards starting up, half-awake, caught sight of her, but she did not pause, knowing that he took her for an Abnaki maiden on her way to the spring. The water revived Flying Swallow a little; he stirred painfully in his bonds; then, in answer to the question in her eyes, spoke in a gasping whisper:

"It is . . . the plans, White Dawn, of le Général Wolfe. . . . Le Duc would make me tell . . . I do not tell . . . it is easier . . . to die than to betray."

White Dawn's face, pale in the moonlit shadow, grew paler still. She put out a hand and steadied herself against the great tree. Her voice came gaspingly as his had done.

"It is . . . too great a price to pay.—You shall not pay it. It is for my sake you are suffering—O God, it is the same as if I killed you!"

She could not face the love that looked at her out

of the eyes of the man who was dying by torture to preserve her secret. It pierced her to the heart. The love that Philip Aubrey had denied, this man had given to the uttermost—even to his life.

She must act quickly or the need for action would be forever past. Since Flying Swallow was too weak to walk or stand unsupported, her only chance of saving him lay in appealing to the council at Quebec. And even this might fail. The life of the one soul on earth who had been loyal to her might be forfeited.

Again she shuddered violently. But no other course was open to her. She must leave him.—In leaving him, lay her only hope.

She bent and lightly touched his forehead with her lips. But Flying Swallow started at that touch as he had not started when the Abnaki knives pierced his breast. The Indian, with the poetry of his race, remembered a May morning, many years before, when he had ridden beneath flowering boughs, that rained a shower of snow upon his path, and compared the touch of those soft lips to the blossom that had brushed his forehead then.

Her thought was of him she was leaving tortured and defenceless in the midst of his enemies, on whose living face she might never look again. And although no Catholic, she signed the cross upon his brow before she left him.

XXIII

LOVE AGAINST DEATH

HER going was as light and noiseless as a leaf stirred by a whispering wind.—A leaf of gay October, with her gold of hair and brown of deerskin, she was gone with the merest flutter of sound. As in a dream, she found her way to where her horse was tied, mounted, and reined him back into the road she had so lately travelled—the road she must travel again on such a desperate errand.

Behind her the Indian camp lay lapped in unbroken stillness—to her a stillness not of peace, but of death. The moon had mounted high above the tree-tops, and the stars told her that it lacked but two hours of midnight. She had no time to spare. The stab of fear was like a physical pang.

As she rode through the warm moonlit hush of the night, oblivious of its beauty and its fragrance, conscious only of the ruthless flight of that vulture, time, there recurred to her insistently the words of her father's prophecy spoken more than a year before in the cabin at St. Frédéric: "O God! the shadow of destiny—it has darkened my path for years,—it has darkened the path of all with whom I have had to do.—It has rested like a fate upon my life. Henceforth it will rest on yours!" The fateful words throbbed through her brain with a maddening clamour;

they seemed to echo and re-echo in the beat of the horse's hoofs.

How utterly that prophecy had been fulfilled! The fatal shadow had cast its gloom upon the lives of all with whom her life had been entwined, even unto this last and humblest follower. Sword and bullet and flame had stricken all that loved her:—father and friend and foster-brother, and, bitterest of all, the poison of disloyalty had tainted her betrothed. Even on this desperate ride to save a life, her heart was aching with the memory of this faithless lover in the camp whose fires gleamed across the river.

She was recalled sharply to a sense of the present by the condition of her horse, whose pace was beginning to flag alarmingly. With agonized gaze she saw by the moonlight his foam-flecked and heaving flanks, knowing that should he fail, the fate of Flying Swallow would be sealed. The dreaded moment was not long deferred. The exhausted animal swerved, and after a struggling effort or two, came to an abrupt standstill.

With a sickening fear, she looked around her. Whither could she turn for help? Everywhere were fields empty beneath the moon, and the desolate white curve of the highway, but far in the distance she espied a solitary farmhouse, the dwelling, doubtless, of some French habitant. She dismounted and walked toward it, leading her horse. The place was dark and silent, looking almost deserted; and it was not until she had thrice knocked loudly at the heavily barred door that it was opened timidly by a dazed and sleepy habitant who regarded her aghast.

"Holy St. Agnès, mademoiselle! it is the great start you have give me! If I might be of such boldness, mademoiselle, as to suggest that you be in your bed——"

She interrupted him feverishly. "Oh, for God's sake, do not stop to question me! Only give me a fresh horse to take me to Quebec! I will pay you well for it."

But he continued to stare at her stupidly; and she frantically repeated her demand.

At last her words seemed to permeate; he shook his head slowly.

"But, non, non, mademoiselle, it is not of a possibility. The good horse is asleep in his stall. I would not wake him for any sum whatever."

She seized his arm and shook him in an almost savage fury. As she did so her long cloak swung back, revealing her dress; and the man recoiled violently.

"Holy Virgin, mademoiselle, what have you done? There is blood there on your dress."

"Fool!" she hurled at him. "It is my brother's blood. They are killing him. He will be dead before another sunset unless I reach Quebec in time; and you dare detain me.—No, I have killed no one, but I will kill you, unless you give me what I ask!"

As she spoke she wrenched the pistol from her belt, and pointed it at him. He began to tremble in terror of this strange being—this beautiful white girl clad like an Indian, with those dreadful blood-stains on her dress.

"O le bon Dieu, mam'selle, do not fire! I will do even that you ask. Have a little pity, mam'selle, and

do not hurt a man with five small children. By the good St. Anne, I promise you the horse."

"Make haste, then, and saddle him!" she cried sternly. "O God! how much time we have wasted!"

Trembling and protesting, he led the way to the stable, and, by the light of the lantern, saddled the "good horse," the girl standing over him, pistol in hand, like a beautiful highwayman.

When he had finished, she fairly snatched the reins from his grasp, sprang with a single swift bound into the saddle, and was away with a clatter of hoofs through the open doorway before the gold louis she tossed him had ceased to spin on the bare puncheons.

Provided with this fresh steed, the miles flew beneath her; and the tents of the scattered camp at Beauport again sprang into sight. But here she could find no succour, for, as fate would have it, that very day Montcalm had been summoned to a council of war at the Governor's palace at Quebec.

At these tidings she was again visited by a sinking of the heart. The horse's hoofs beat out a very tocsin of despair. To her physical exhaustion she gave no heed. On and on and on she rode, untiring, through open intervals of moonlight, through woodland depths of shade, past tent and hut and wigwam, guard and sentry, conscious only that the sure dials of the stars above her were pointing to the hour of midnight, and that her hope of rescue was hanging now on minutes—nay, on seconds.

At last, after what seemed eternity, the lights of Quebec began to glitter through the darkness, the hoofs of the flagging horse struck fire from the stones of

the steep street, and, drawing rein at the Governor's palace, whence the council chamber cast its glow into the night, she sprang from the saddle, and confronted the soldier guarding the entrance, crying, "For Christ's sake, let me pass!"

Within the palace were gathered the Governor and his council, Montcalm and his officers, and numerous nobles whose prominence in civil and military affairs gave their advice due weight. Among these were Rupert de Valois, the Duke of Ardenne and Father d'Estournelles. The council were sitting late—they had been engaged for hours in an animated discussion—and a decision had not yet been reached. For the situation they faced was serious enough: the enemy were at their very gate; English tents below the Montmorenci; English battleships above the town, their food supply imperilled, their vigilance distracted by utter ignorance of the course Wolfe would adopt.

Yet through all the grave-faced discussion, Rupert de Valois sat with a cynical smile on his lips—the smile he would still have worn had the world itself been crumbling at his feet.

A moment's pause had fallen on the assembly—a silence of perplexity and thought—when a sudden stir was heard at the outer door, and the hush was abruptly broken by the entrance of Grace.

She staggered with upflung arms into the circle. The dark cloak slipped from about her shoulders, showing her clad in the dress of an Algonquin girl. No touch was lacking; even her hair was braided with beads and banded with wampum. Rupert de Valois started uncontrollably. In this wild attire she was

even more vividly beautiful—the effect, perhaps, of the startling contrast between the Anglo-Celtic loveliness and its barbaric setting. Rupert de Valois vowed with redoubled passion that he would never relinquish this rare jewel to another.

The girl's imploring glance flashed round the council chamber. It could be seen that her dress was torn and mud-splashed, and marked by certain ominous crimson stains. Suddenly she swayed forward and threw herself on her knees before Montcalm. Her voice came in little gasps of terror and exhaustion.

"O Monsieur le Marquis, save him!—Flying Swallow, my brother, whom they are killing yonder! For Christ's sake, Monsieur le Marquis, give me a pardon that I may save him before it is too late!"

XXIV

THE PRICE

SHE knelt, imploring hands outstretched, a picture of pleading beauty.

Suddenly she sprang up, and taking the crucifix from her neck, held it out to the assembly, crying: "Oh, my lords, will not this symbol of suffering move you to make an end of suffering?"

"Do you dare compare the sufferings of the Son of God with those of this heathen Abnaki?" Vaudreuil demanded, frowning.

"Yes," she said softly, "but without sacrilege. For though our Lord was God, did not His body suffer as a man's? Did not He speak of those that suffer as 'the least of these, My brethren'?"

A murmur of involuntary admiration stirred the council.

"Thou hast answered well, my daughter," said Father d'Estournelles.

She looked at him with grateful eyes, little dreaming of his championship, for she knew how vainly he had striven with the obdurate Flying Swallow.

Then she stretched out her hands to him pleadingly: "Father, be merciful and save him—guiltless of all save too great a devotion to me."

Montcalm was plainly moved; he hesitated, and

seemed about to yield, when Rupert de Valois rose in his place.

"Beware, Monsieur le Général, lest your sympathy be seduced by this piteous plea. Your beautiful suppliant has neglected to mention some details which it might be well that you should hear before judging, and which, with your permission, I will endeavour to supply."

He spoke with a dangerous softness. Grace stood watching him with suspended breath.

"This man," he continued in his cold, even tones, like the thrust of a blade, "this man deserves death. Not only has he played the spy here at Quebec, but a year ago at Ticonderoga, he went with our fair suppliant here to warn the English army at St. Sacrement of our plans. Judge if such a man be a fit subject for clemency."

The girl's fear-widened eyes were fastened on his face. She was trembling visibly, and there was not a vestige of colour in her cheek. Her fear, long cherished, had been justified. "France will never forgive," she had said to Flying Swallow on that journey, and France had not forgiven.

Montcalm turned to her sternly. "Mademoiselle, is this true?"

She gave a little moaning sob like the cry of some hurt thing. "Yes, it is true in part, but not in all. O God, have pity—and listen to me!"

Her hands were clasped convulsively against her breast. It seemed as if her heart had leaped to her lips and was pleading there.

"It is true that Flying Swallow went with me to

St. Sacrement, but he knew nothing of my errand. He simply went as my protector, nothing more."

For a moment the pleading note died out of her voice, and she straightened herself, speaking almost fiercely.

"I will not justify my deed. I am English to the heart and have ever been. And I did not work by stealth. Ask the Duc de Valois if I did not warn him!"

There was a challenge in her tone, and a hint of the lioness in her poise. She faced de Valois fully.

He shrugged his shoulders, a careless smile curling his mouth.

"Mon Dieu, yes—mademoiselle, you warned me fairly enough."

"Why did you not tell me this before, Monsieur le Duc?" inquired Montcalm sternly.

Again de Valois shrugged his shoulders. "I thought it but an idle threat—I am not used to these English women—they are too much in earnest. Knowing the danger and hardships of such a journey —I dreamt not this girl had either the courage or the power to accomplish it."

"But if you knew the threat had been fulfilled," Montcalm persisted, "why was I not informed of it?"

"A coin gains value sometimes by long keeping—it may, perchance, find a better purchaser, one who will pay more than its face value for the gold. I am not one to throw away my treasure, *too soon,* my lord."

Montcalm eyed the speaker with evident distaste.

"Hardly a patriotic course, Monsieur le Duc, however profitable to you personally," he remarked bitingly.

De Valois laughed in cold fury. "Patriotic! I challenge you if I stand not as high in patriotism as any Frenchman here"—he swept the council with a sneering smile. "I tell you I did but bide my time. I swear to you by St. Denis that if you release this traitor I will never draw sword again in your command!"

It was characteristic of de Valois that he had not had Flying Swallow hanged as a spy as he might have done, but had decided instead, with diabolical cruelty, to let the Algonquin's furious kinsmen torture him to death. He had not intended that Grace should hear of it till all was over, when it would have been easy to feign ignorance of the entire affair, but Dorette's tattling had exposed him, and, incidentally, played into his hand the trump-card of triumph. . . . She should be rewarded—the pretty little tattler—by a kiss or two, and a gay bauble such as her vain little heart delighted in.

Vaudreuil now interrupted coldly. "Gentlemen, gentlemen, call a truce to this profitless discord. Here we waste time upon an outcast Indian when the fate of Quebec—nay, of New France itself—hangs in the balance. The fellow's life is forfeit—let us dismiss the matter."

Vaudreuil had regarded Grace with disfavour from the moment of her entrance into the council-chamber. Perhaps the very fact that Montcalm had displayed toward her a chivalrous pity had strengthened his own

antagonism, for he and the French commander, during the whole of their association together, had always been radically opposed to each other. They were, indeed, hostile by temperament; Montcalm vivacious, impulsive, and impatient; Vaudreuil, cold and deliberate, with an inherent distrust which soon developed into jealousy toward his warmer-hearted colleague.

From the coming of de Valois to New France, Vaudreuil had espoused his cause,—even equipping the expedition which had attacked Fort Dummer. Montcalm, on the contrary, had from the first regarded the Duke with aversion, and would gladly have liberated the fair prisoner. He had been torn between pity and patriotism, but when it came to a final combat between them, pity must go to the wall.

It was not Vaudreuil, but France which swayed the scale of Montcalm's decision now: Canada's fate was trembling in the balance and Rupert de Valois was too strong an ally to be estranged when the enemy was at her very gates.

He turned reluctantly to Grace: "Mademoiselle, it grieves me more than I can say to tell you that I cannot grant this pardon."

A cry of despair burst from her lips: "No, no, O God! no! You cannot—you will not! The guilt was never his! There is nothing I would not do—nothing I would not grant to save him!"

The room became mist before her eyes. She saw Flying Swallow encircled by the ring of flame. O God, was there no way left to save him?

Yes, there was one way, and only one—a way of

shame and betrayal—yet she must walk it or see him die.

She held in her hands like a brimming cup the honour of a nation; it was hers to guard the sacred wine in safety, or with traitorous hands to dash it to the ground.

With a pitiful hesitation she turned to Montcalm, conscious that Rupert de Valois was watching her as a snake might watch a bird entrapped.

"Monsieur," she began in a strange dull voice like muted bell-tones, "Monsieur, would you give me——"

Rupert de Valois snatched the words from the quivering lips.

"Mademoiselle," he said, smiling, "there is one thing I did not tell the council. When 'your brother,' Monsieur le Flying Swallow, visited the English camp, he brought thither some papers—plans were they not?—of le Général Wolfe. They are either in his possession or in yours. . . . Come, let us make a bargain. His life—is it worth to you what those plans are to us?"

A surge of piteous colour swept her face, and, receding, left her paler than before. Her lips parted as if to assent, but no sound came. She stood absolutely motionless, her hands locked at her breast, her eyes fixed upon space—an image of the eternal choice between love and honour. In an instant the wizard, memory, had conjured up a picture of the past: Flying Swallow saving her, a child, from the leaping flames; Red Plume dying to defend her father.

What she had signed away in the marriage-contract

with de Valois had been hers to give—her fate, her happiness. . . . What was demanded of her now was not hers—the honour of a nation. The price they asked was costly beyond all words; yet she must pay it. She would never have dreamed of paying it to save her own life; she was brave enough to have gone to any death sooner than betray the charge entrusted to her keeping. But when there hung in the balance the life of the man, who—barring Philip Aubrey—was dearest to her of all on earth,—the man who had saved her from a dreadful death, who had guarded her childhood, and shielded her young womanhood, and had offered his life for her again and again,—there could be no choice.

It seemed a lifetime that she stood there wavering,—though it was but a moment,—yet thus nations rise and fall and destinies are altered.

A strange silence fell upon the council. Once Montcalm made a movement as if to remonstrate; his lips parted as if to speak, but some inexorable countermotive seemed to stay his hand and seal his lips. Grace met their gaze with a look, half bitter scorn for men who could thus shamefully force from her her secret, half the misery of a creature trapped and helpless.

Then her eyes fell to the blood-stains on her dress, and, with a shudder, the barriers went down. She turned again to the council—her beautiful face stern and cold and passionless as the sphinx, her voice the voice of one in a trance.

"Release him, and I will tell you all!"

Rupert de Valois smiled coldly. "Eh bien! it has

taken you long to decide. Will you now be pleased to produce the papers, mademoiselle?"

But her answer was given to Montcalm: "What warrant have I that my brother's life shall be saved? To you, Monsieur le Marquis, I appeal, for I trust not this man's word on any oath!"

"Will you not trust me, mademoiselle?" Montcalm replied. "I promise you upon the honour of a French gentleman."

She bent her head in assent, and without speaking drew the papers from her dress and gave them into Montcalm's hand.

He quickly wrote some words on a slip of paper.

"This is the pardon," then, touching a bell beside him, "I will send a guard with you, in case there should be need."

Again she assented mutely. She stood waiting, the pardon clasped to her breast. Did a cell in the citadel await her, she wondered? But it did not matter—now she could no longer aid the English. And in her ears with cruel clamour a voice cried, "Traitress! Traitress!"

As she passed from the council-room Rupert de Valois said sneeringly in her ear, "A heavy price to pay for *one* Indian!" But she seemed not to have heard him—her statue-like immobility never changed. Those wide eyes, fixed inexorably upon the distance, did not turn to his. The trance of horror enveloped her; she had no power to shake off its poisonous folds.

As, accompanied by the French guard, she rode at desperate speed through the deep darkness of the sunken moon, the darkness that would end in dawn—

she thought—not of the price she had paid to save Flying Swallow, but of the two dawns—the fatal dawn that was drawing so near, and herself, " White Dawn," riding to his rescue,—and perhaps in vain. . . .

There passed and repassed before her eyes the hideous vision of what she might behold, and at intervals she put her arm before her face as if to hide the sight. As a child she had not been wholly spared the horrors of savage warfare; and she remembered a Mohawk prisoner whom she had rescued from his Algonquin captors, only to see him die a few hours later of his injuries.

Just as the dawn was breaking they reached the Indian camp. The fire of death was burning about Flying Swallow, but Grace, regardless of her danger, sprang through the ring of flame, and laid her hands upon his shoulders, sobbing out, " I have saved you! White Dawn has saved her brother, Flying Swallow! "

Then her face, so piteously white in the dawning, went whiter yet—the realization of her betrayal of faith stabbed her like a dagger—and, her arms still clinging round him in a last impulse of protection, she swayed forward, her head drooped heavily against his shoulder, and she sank senseless at his feet.

XXV

SEALED LIPS

GRACE had Flying Swallow brought to Quebec and laid in her own bed at the palace where she and one of the Ursuline Sisters bound up his wounds. Injuries which would have killed a white man made but a temporary impress upon a body strengthened by the forest vigour of generations. The protective—the mother-instinct—inborn in every true woman, was doubly strong in Grace. She watched over Flying Swallow in his helplessness as if he had been her child.

This pity was repaid abundantly. His love for his foster-sister,—always a fierce devotion,—became idolatry. No worshipper before the shrine of the Virgin could have poured out his soul in a greater ecstasy of adoration. It was a mute passion, whose only eloquence was of the heart. He did not need to kneel and kiss her hand as a white man would have done—he had no need even of speech—his eyes when they rested upon her told her all.

Grace, having come to know that Rupert de Valois had murdered her father and Red Plume, felt herself bound to Flying Swallow by a double bond of gratitude and fate. Both had been orphaned by the same hand.

But this tightening of one bond had been the severing of another. Grace had discovered the identity of the eavesdropper who had betrayed the secret of that meeting on the bastion. She had accused Dorette of this, and the little maid had attempted to deny it, but the evidence against her had been too strong, and Grace had sorrowfully but firmly told her that they must part. Dorette, still tearfully protesting, had retired, weeping spasmodically, but peeping out beneath the shelter of her hands to observe whether anyone was watching her. Yet, shallow as the girl was, untrue as she had been, it was a pang to Grace to part with her, for Dorette was the last tie—save one—binding her to the old sweet life at St. Frédéric—golden strands of the past, severed one by one by a relentless destiny. The sole link left to her was Flying Swallow.

But the parting with Dorette, which at any other time would have filled the whole horizon, was overshadowed now by the dark shame of that enforced betrayal. It mattered little to Grace that she was held in close surveillance, was, in fact, a prisoner within the confines of the citadel, since all her hope of aiding General Wolfe was dead;—nay, more, when in his eyes she must be branded with the name of traitress. This was a poison eating out her very soul. She spared herself no less because the secret had been wrung from her, than if she had given it from a treacherous heart. The quality of her loyalty was too fine to find solace thus.

Strangely enough it was Montcalm himself who assuaged this passion of shame. He came to see her,

spoke affectionately of her father, and presently, with all his courtly grace, asked her forgiveness for having been forced to sacrifice her to the exigency of the moment.

She looked at him and her face softened. "Yes, I forgive you, monsieur—it is noble of you to ask it. At first I hated you for not helping me. Then, I saw that, like mine, your hands were tied; yours by love of country, mine by love of a brother; and then I ceased to blame you!"

He smiled—his kind and winning smile. "You remind me, mademoiselle, of my own dear daughters in France—Oh, my beloved Candiac with its mulberries and chestnut-groves! Let me tell you, too, my child, that you have a great sense of justice—a rare thing it is in woman. The good God knows what the future has in store for me and for New France. But whatever it bring, I pray it may bring peace and liberation to you, dear mademoiselle."

That very morning Montcalm, discussing with Vaudreuil the scene at the council, had spoken of Grace as "this beautiful English child whom we have sacrificed to our scheming"; to which Vaudreuil, ever caustic, had retorted:

"Child;—a dangerous woman rather! See, how she has set us all by the ears. Your 'child,' mon cher Général, is a most subtle plotter, who rivals La Pompadour in beauty and fascination. Regard her lovers—all the way from a duke to a savage." He laughed cynically. "Mon Dieu, she's a second 'Helen of Troy'—we might send her with our compliments into General Wolfe's camp—she would do more harm

there than a French shell. Or we might ship her overseas to France. Ma foi, she would make La Pompadour look to her laurels!"

Montcalm made a gesture of remonstrance. "It were almost sacrilege, mon ami, to compare that scheming madam with this innocent child."

"Child," Vaudreuil repeated. "Parbleu—a dangerous child as I have said!—both she and this Algonquin are arch-conspirators, equally involved in guilt, but—woman-like,—she escapes her share of the penalty. Think you she really loves the fellow, heathen and savage as he is?"

"Mon Dieu, no!" Montcalm exclaimed, "it was only a pity divine as the Virgin's that made her stoop to save him at such cost. I tell you, mon Governeur, the confession we wrung from Mademoiselle Stuart was as dishonourably gained as that wrung from a man upon the rack. When we must stoop to such means it augurs ill for New France. Can we hope for another miracle to save us? I trust in God; He fought for us on the 8th of July. Come what may, His will be done!"

During the two months in which the English had been encamped before Quebec, Philip Aubrey had suffered increasing tortures of anxiety and remorse. All his inquiries concerning Grace had been fruitless; he knew no more of her than on that first day when he gazed across the river from Point Levi. When on the 31st of July, Wolfe had made a brave but unsuccessful assault upon Montcalm's camp at Montmorenci, Aubrey, charging amid the Royal Americans

up that desperate steep, had welcomed the fierce diversion from his torturing thoughts.

But, the excitement over, the gnawing misery had returned intensified. This August evening, as he stood on the shore in the darkness, it seemed to him he could bear it no longer. He would do to-night what had long been in his mind to do; he was in a mood of recklessness and despair that counts no cost. There was a brief truce between the combatants which favoured his project; but at best the chances were desperate.

It was perhaps nine o'clock of that misty evening when a man in the white uniform of a French captain approached the citadel-gate, and, having duly given the countersign, was admitted to the courtyard. He strolled carelessly forward a few steps, then, finding himself unobserved, slipped suddenly behind an angle of the masonry and concealed himself in its shadow.

A few moments later there was a sound of light footsteps in the courtyard, and a woman came slowly toward the bastion behind which the watcher was concealed. She was hidden from head to foot in a dark cloak, like the mystery that wrapped her fate. She sank down on a jutting stone of the wall, and sat awhile, bowed together, her arms circling her knees, singing beneath her breath a plaintive Algonquin song,—the song she had sung on the old wilderness trail.

"We are the stars which sing,
We sing with our light; . . .
Our light is a voice;
We make a road for spirits."

Presently, she rose, and stood looking expectantly toward the citadel. Gradually the mist had lifted and the light of a struggling moon revealed her face. A thrill, half-joy, half-pain, ran through the man who crouched behind the bastion. His passionate wish had been fulfilled; he was looking upon the face of Grace Stuart.

Footsteps again became audible; footsteps slower and heavier than hers had been; and Flying Swallow moved weakly to her side. Still haggard from the hideous cruelty he had suffered, his face in the moonlight seemed gentler and less savage.

Around them the shattered, half-deserted city—symbol, it seemed to her, of her own life—its dreams shattered, its hopes deserted.

Grace had come at last to face the bitter truth that—Aubrey being lost to her forever—Flying Swallow was the only being on earth who truly loved her. Marseille d'Ardenne, she knew, would have married her gladly, but his hands were tied by de Valois. She realized that nothing now was left her but a marriage with Flying Swallow, a marriage which, degrading as it might seem to worldly eyes, was in her sight inexpressibly happy compared with marriage with a man who held all womanhood in scorn.

For Flying Swallow, sundered though he was from her by the wide chasm of race and religion, would be true to her as the needle to the pole-star, would, as he had already shown, give his life for her if need be. Gratitude was in her eyes the chiefest of all virtues. The boundless debt she owed him could never be paid

save in this one way; and she was a true daughter of the Covenanters to whom duty was sacred at any cost, though the iron entered into their souls.

Taking one of his rough bronzed hands, she closed both her white hands over it, and looked into his face with piteous entreaty, saying softly, "Flying Swallow, take me away from this place. When you offered your life to guard my secret, when I revealed that secret to save your life, I knew the bond between us could never be broken. On the old wilderness trail we were happy. Let us go away together into the forest and never, never return again!"

But the savage in Flying Swallow, prompting him to seize and hold, was restrained by an innate chivalry which made him shrink from taking that so piteously proffered him. He realized that her love for him was still, and must always be, the love of a sister, while his had changed to that of man for woman, of the lover for his mate.

Grace felt no shrinking from him, only a sorrowful yearning for the old peace, the old friendship, now forever past. She seemed to feel the clasp of his strong arms about her as she had felt when, as a frightened child, she had clung to him, terrified by the forest sounds. If he could only be her brother again, and not this strange new being to whom, in this unwonted guise, she dared not turn for help. No—she could never go to him as his sister again; if she went she must go as his wife.

She laid her hands upon his breast but she kept her face averted, and upon it was the wistful seal of a great sacrifice.

The light of the moon was strong enough to illumine their faces for that heart-broken watcher. It showed him the unmistakable passion of Flying Swallow and the appealing look of Grace.

Slowly the Abnaki drew her to him. A sick shudder passed through Aubrey as he saw that she did not resist. He had an impulse to spring from his hiding-place and snatch her from him, then he realized its futility. Another moment and Flying Swallow's arms would have been around her, but at that instant a shell from Wolfe's batteries sailed in a flaming arc across the river, a weird accompaniment to that betrothal.

As it burst above the town, illumining their faces with a ghastly light, Grace and Flying Swallow instinctively drew apart. Aubrey saw her glance upward, her lips moving as if in prayer, then she turned, and with a lingering look at Flying Swallow, disappeared around the angle of the bastion.

The brief truce was ended. Shell after shell came hurtling high in air, a blazing menace, to burst with hideous discord overhead and drop its fiery fragments of destruction. Through the gathering mist these burning missiles had the look of comets swathed in flaming vapour. In the midst of the confusion Aubrey escaped unseen, and, sick at heart, made his way back to the camp at Montmorenci.

He had learned what he had gone to learn and the knowledge was bitter beyond words. Grace was lost to him forever. The dream of atonement for which he had prayed so long would never be fulfilled.

Hardly conscious of his movements he wandered aimlessly toward the camp-fire around which were

gathered the officers of his regiment; and stood lingering in the shadow, his eyes regarding blindly the ring of firelit faces, their voices falling on dulled ears.

Gradually, however, he became aware that a man was speaking, a man he had long known and to whom he had carelessly confided his love-affair at St. Frédéric.

"If Lord Howe had lived she might have worn the coronet," the voice said. "If ever love looked out of a man's eyes, 'twas in his when she stood there before us all, and appealed to him for protection. My lord wouldn't have minded her being penniless and friendless, the daughter of a Highland outlaw. He'd have said that he had enough wealth and honour for both.

"Well, Aubrey was different—he'd more of this world about him,—a captain's pay isn't lavish, and gold goes further than love in this world's currency. . . .

"Faith, though, how she looked when she straightened up and defied General Abercrombie. If ever I saw two matched and mated, 'twas she and my lord. Upon my soul, she is different from any other woman. I've seen scores of handsome women in my day, but it's not mere beauty with her—just eyes and hair and skin—I can't well describe it;—if I was religious I suppose I'd call it soul.

"Ah, well! Aubrey will marry this Albany beauty and her coin of the realm, and the one who might have wed Grace Stuart sleeps in his grave,—it's the way the world runs—more's the pity!"

Though every word which fell from those uncon-

sciously condemning lips was a judgment, Aubrey lingered, miserably eager to hear all. The boy, the youth,—gay, idle, selfish,—died under those sharp thrusts of condemnation. Out of the bitter travail of spirit the man was born.

Meanwhile General Wolfe, surrounded by his higher officers, sat in his tent, absorbed in troubled musing. The movements of the French within the last few days had convinced him that his most secret plans had become known to them. But who was the betrayer? His suspicions, naturally directed towards Grace, had been suddenly turned into another channel. Colonel William Howe, a brother of the Viscount, now in command of the light infantry, was speaking.

"General Wolfe, let me repeat:—every indication points toward Captain Aubrey. He is known to have corresponded with the enemy; and now I have it from his colonel that he was absent this evening without leave, and was seen by the sentry returning in the disguise of a French captain. If such circumstances do not sustain my suspicions, I do not know what can. I should advise you, General Wolfe, to put Captain Aubrey under arrest."

"My God! It is incredible!" said Wolfe slowly. "I have sometimes thought Aubrey boyish and volatile, but always worthy of trust! I recommended him for promotion for his courage in the charge last month. What motive could he have had? Well, there is no other way, I must question him. Perhaps he may yet be able to clear himself."

A little later, Aubrey, summoned by Wolfe's com-

mand, stood regarding the circle of officers in grave perplexity. His mind, still dazed by the events of the evening, did not instantly grasp the purport of the questions addressed to him. He had known nothing of Flying Swallow's surreptitious visits to the camp; nor of the papers he had carried thence, for the Abnaki had had no desire to meet his enemy until that day when one sharp thrust should pay the vow of vengeance made at Albany. But Aubrey had learned enough from that scene on the bastion to know that Grace, to save Flying Swallow, had been compelled to deliver the plans of Wolfe into French hands.

There came to him a lightning-flash of revelation. The chance for expiation had been granted him. With a strange look of purpose he answered Wolfe's last question.

"Yes, it is true, I went to-night, disguised as a French soldier, into Quebec. But my mission there I cannot tell you."

So profound was the silence that the sharp-drawn breath of his hearers seemed to shatter it.

Then Wolfe struck his hands together violently. "My God! I cannot believe that any officer of mine can be guilty of such treachery! Captain Aubrey, unless you can give me an explanation, I must order you under arrest!"

Aubrey smiled strangely, almost happily, but he made no answer. His lips were sealed. They would never open to betray the truth—to brand as traitress the woman he so remorsefully loved—though that silence should cost his life itself.

XXVI

EXPIATION

WOLFE broke off abruptly and regarded the prisoner with a troubled look.

"I cannot rid myself of the impression that there is something behind all this, Captain Aubrey, and yet, as you refuse to enlighten us, we must judge according to what light we have."

The trial had already lasted several hours without producing any new evidence, or eliciting the slightest confession from the accused, but every sign, every circumstance, had been a feather pointing the way the wind of suspicion blew. And the wind blew unveeringly upon Aubrey. He had willed it so, and he had wrought with admirable skill. A meaning word or two here, a significant silence there, had laid the train of suspicion to which inference had set the match. And the explosion which resulted had shaken the ground beneath his feet and left him amid the wreckage of what had been but the day before an honoured and a promising career.

Obviously Aubrey was guilty. To Wolfe, however shaken with misgiving, only one course was open. The traitor must die. But what manner of death? Colonel Howe, who had been Aubrey's first accuser, sternly advocated hanging. But Wolfe, humane by nature, was doubly loath to see one of his own officers

die the abhorred death. He was becoming more and more convinced that Aubrey did not care whether he lived or died, and—what was much more incredible to a soldier—that he cared nothing how he died. To Wolfe, himself in the grip of a deadly disease, and on the eve of a desperate enterprise, the whole affair was intensely painful. But from duty he never shrank.

He rose now, his pale features stern with suppressed feeling.

"Captain Aubrey, you have heard the evidence of the court. Is there any reason why sentence should not be passed upon you?"

There was no change in the calm of Aubrey's face as he answered, "There is none."

Stern soldier though he was, Wolfe could not wholly conceal his emotion.

"Captain Aubrey, there now falls to me the most painful duty of my life: that of pronouncing upon you sentence of death. But since you have been a soldier and a brave one, and I once trusted you, you shall not die by the rope. You will be shot at sunrise to-morrow. Guards, remove the prisoner."

Aubrey bowed his head in acquiescence. Strangely enough he smiled, as he had smiled that night when Wolfe had ordered him under arrest, as he had not smiled since that November morning at St. Frédéric when his search for Grace Stuart had failed. For the first time in months his mind was at peace. To his own soul he had made atonement. Perhaps in the years to come, when his fate and its enveloping shame had been forgotten by all others, she would remember with pity not that he had been noble, not

that he had been true, but that, at last, he had done what he could in expiation.

That last night—as he sat alone in his guarded tent, with the measured tread of the sentry in his ears, his thoughts journeyed far into the past—that country rich for him with a harvest of sweet and bitter memories.

He was back once more on the blue sunlit reaches of Champlain; he saw again the lovely fearless figure at his side—the Titian golden of her hair; the warm wood-brown of her dress; the lithe unconscious grace of every movement; the rapid gliding of the birch canoe, the sparkling rush of water at the bow, the flash of diamonds from the dripping paddle, the snowy circling birds like guardian spirits, and over all the sapphire ocean of the April sky, bespread with white cloud-caravels. . . .

Then, by a natural sequence, his thoughts turned to Flying Swallow, with whom, in his utter abasement of soul, he began to contrast himself bitterly. For where his love had been faint and fickle—a very will-o'-the-wisp,—the Abnaki's had been steadfast as a star; where Aubrey had set self upon a pinnacle, Flying Swallow had effaced self even to utter sacrifice. He had merely attained to the level of this savage whom he had hardly deigned to despise. . . .

The scene in Albany returned to him; he stood again in the doorway, confronting Flying Swallow. . . . He knelt in the great pew, and the crimson rose fell unheeded to the floor. . . . He recalled the ensuing interview with Cicely, and at the memory the shamed blood burned his face. He had tried to

tell her the story of Grace, but Cicely, after the first few words, had stopped him. "I understand enough," she had said bitterly, and would hear no more.

Had Grace ever received his letter—that letter of contrition? Or had it come too late? Yet when all was said, if he had been true to his promise, there would have been no need of a letter.

Now his thoughts drifted shudderingly to Lord Howe; the friend whose warning had been all in vain. Strange irony that the Viscount's brother should be his most inexorable judge!

Two men, from the opposite poles of life, had made his own love seem a bauble, a tawdry thing not worth the taking. Two men—one a savage—one the noblest Briton of his day—had shown him what true love was;—not love the passion, the desire, but love the sacrament, love the sacrifice.

All his boyish arrogance, his gay peacock spreading of tinsel conceits, fell from him like shorn feathers, leaving him stripped, indeed, a naked soul ashamed to face itself, yet serious at last, and, at last, sincere.

There flashed before him, etched with painful vividness on his feverishly active brain, his parting with Grace at St. Frédéric, and her refusal of a kiss. He began to be haunted by the thought that now he must die without having once kissed her. The thought had become an agony; an obsession. Tortured by it, he walked the tent.

Oh, the past, the irrevocable past, forever beyond all human power of change! It was too late, too late—for him there was no to-morrow, no looking forward. All was at an end!

The chaplain entered and laid upon the table, where the light of the single candle could shine upon it, a prayer-book opened to the passage: "For persons under sentence of death," and, with a pitying glance at the prisoner, withdrew. Thus recalled to the present, Aubrey let his eyes wander over the page before him. He drew a shuddering breath and struck his hands together despairingly as he realized how little he was fitted to be thrust into this unknown world.

His had never been a religious nature; he was too volatile, too careless, too greatly lacking in introspection. Though he had gone debonair and laughing through so many battles, he had never seriously faced the thought of death. He was as little prepared to die as a butterfly, which has spread gay wings to the sun, and fluttered all the summer through from flower to flower, is prepared to brave the boisterous wind and winter cold.

How more than futile his life had been. His was the doom of the unfaithful—of the virgins with dying lamps, of the unprofitable servant with the buried talent. He remembered that he had always felt a lurking pity for the foolish virgins—poor, gay, heedless merrymakers, awaking too late to the knowledge that life was not a revel,—little dreaming that his fate and theirs would be one. The doors of earthly paradise and heavenly approval were alike shut to him. He had been cast into the darkness of a death without honour and without hope; and the black waters of oblivion would soon close above the quenched taper of his life.

His head sank forward suddenly upon his outstretched arms. "Grace, sweetheart, have pity on me!" he whispered, "I cannot pray, but it is for you I die!"

So he might have invoked the Virgin or a saint. It was a strange prayer, yet it brought peace; gave him strength somehow to thrust aside that shuddering fear, and look death in the face.

Through the mist-veiled midnight the figure of a girl in deerskin stole noiselessly out at the St. Louis gate, passed by the sentry as an Indian woman going to join her people outside the city. Once beyond the gate Grace moved rapidly through the dense darkness, till she reached a point where a deep ravine cleft the sharp face of the cliff. Here she paused instinctively. It was the scene of her great despair, the scene of that passionate appeal which had been so marvellously answered.

At the head of the ravine clustered the tents of Vergor's outpost, commanding the precipitous descent. To evade discovery would be impossible, yet this spot afforded the only access to the shore. She crept slowly forward, making no effort at concealment, and presently the guard espied her, but his sole comment was that of the sentry at the gate, "Only an Indian girl! Why stop her?"

With trembling caution she began to descend, moving inch by inch in the darkness, for one false step would mean a fall, and a fall here would be inevitably fatal. Her Indian training stood her in good stead. Overhanging branches whipped her face; briers

tore her dress; jagged rocks cut her fingers; but with set teeth she felt her way, holding her breath, lest any loosened stone betray her presence to some too-watchful ear.

For once she was safe from the surveillance of Flying Swallow. Only his physical inability could have prevented his following her.

Down, down, she crept into the yawning blackness, a seemingly interminable distance.

The foot of the cliff was reached at last. With a sigh of relief she stood up, straightening her stiffened body, and listening with strained ears for any sound from out the mist. But, save for an occasional challenge from the sentries on some English war-ships, the silence was intense.

Her heart beat fast as she groped her way along the shore to the place where a canoe should be hidden which she had bribed an Indian boy to procure for her earlier in the evening. Suppose he had been discovered in the act! Every pulse in her body throbbed unbearably at the thought of turning back.

All night it had seemed to her that Aubrey was calling to her from the depths of some dire need. But no—a dim outline caught her eyes, her questing fingers touched the pliant bark;—in a moment she had pushed the little vessel free, and was drifting out upon the shrouded river.

Crouched in the bow, she thrust the canoe toward mid-stream with a few well-directed strokes, then, huddled in the bottom, permitted it to drift with the tide, while she listened with straining nerves for any sound that would indicate an English ship.

Suddenly rang a hail out of the mist, "Who goes there?"

Careless of caution, she stood up, and hailed him in return. "A friend! One with urgent news for General Wolfe. Do not delay me."

The sentry, peering into the dimness, discerned the outlines of a woman's form, and lowered his poised musket. Instinctively his stern tones softened.

"Advance, friend!"

Swiftly she paddled beneath the vessel's bow, looming wraith-like in the mist above her head, and continued on her way.

The blurred outlines of the opposite shore sprang into sight at last. She could hear the measured tramp of the sentinel, though as yet he was invisible; and the saucy stanzas of "Hot Stuff" to the tune, "Lilies of France," floated out over the water. With a now desperate haste she pushed the canoe shoreward just as the sentry, glimpsing her, and breaking off his singing in mid-stave, sprang, musket at poise, down the bank.

Swaying with exhaustion, she alighted, the sentry standing over her, agape with astonishment.

"Where is General Wolfe?" she demanded. "Take me to him at once."

But the sentry continued to gape at her stupidly, till, wild with impatience, she broke from his detaining grasp, and ran swiftly up the steep bank toward the camp.

Day was not distant. The sky was greying with the mist of dawn, and all about her were the sounds of awakening life. Guided by these, she struggled on.

A melancholy procession was moving slowly toward an open space by the river. In their midst walked Aubrey, white but calm. The careless, gay young face had been strangely transfigured; it was lighted now by the glory of sacrifice. He had rejoiced that his mother, pretty, childish Marjory Campbell, had not lived to see his shame, little dreaming that in reality he had never climbed to heights of higher honour. For the fickle, pleasure-loving boy—the gay military butterfly—had at last attained to the dignity of a manhood that could sacrifice life itself for love. Facing a shameful death from the muskets of his countrymen for the sake of the woman he had so wantonly deserted, and now so remorsefully loved, he faced also, all unknowing, the noblest moment of his life.

The dawnlight deepened. The river-mist was lifting, and soon the sun would shine upon his face. But not in life—nevermore in life!

At one side stood Wolfe, with more than the wanness of disease upon his cheek, as the signal was given, and the firing party advanced. Aubrey faced them, quiet and serene. A silence grim and tense wrapped the scene as each man waited, with hushed heart, for the command to fire. Then, suddenly a girl's figure in torn and fluttering deerskin rushed wildly up the bank, and clutched at Wolfe's arm, gasping out, "O God! release him! He is innocent!"

As Wolfe, electrified, made a signal to the officer in command, Aubrey advanced unsteadily to where Grace stood, and, shaken with emotion, fell at her

feet, pressing the hem of her deerskin gown to his lips, and sobbing out, "My little Grace of God!"

How little it had meant to him once—that name so playfully spoken! And now—O Heaven! what a world of meaning in the words,—"Grace of God! My little Grace of God!"

XXVII

RENUNCIATION

GRACE, her gown still prisoned in Aubrey's trembling hands, turned to General Wolfe. "I am ready to die in his stead. I betrayed your plans to save the life of a man who loved me, who rescued me in childhood from a fearful death, and was dying by torture to preserve my secret."

There was not a quiver in her voice. Her face, marble in the dawnlight, was not pale from fear.

"You may shoot me if you will," she repeated mechanically, "but Captain Aubrey is innocent."

With a sudden relief of tension Wolfe smiled—a half-whimsical smile, "We English are not in the habit of shooting women."

"I do not see what difference it can make whether I am man or woman, so that I betrayed you," she said with characteristic naïveté.

"But, my dear madam, there are those to whom it makes a difference," insisted Wolfe kindly. "At the present moment you are much more in danger of English glances than of English bullets."

His eyes, courteously keen, rested on her in quick appraisal. Mud-stained, bruised, and weary, with torn dress and dishevelled hair, she was lovely still.

Wolfe was impressed, as Lord Howe, "the earlier Wolfe," had been, with her air of nobleness.

There was deep tragedy now in the look with which she regarded him, as with faltering voice she recounted the scene at the council.

"I felt that Englishmen for all time would think of me as Judas. Betrayal of my country. Yet not, like Judas, for thirty pieces of silver! O God! not for that! . . .

"Oh, I would have lied if I could, to save your honour and mine. But not even perjury was permitted me. I dared not try to mislead them,—the penalty of failure was too great—the life of the only being fate had left me out of those I loved!"

Her voice quivered over the last words, and Aubrey, understanding, shuddered.

"I think it was told me," said Wolfe, "that you once risked your life to warn Lord Howe at Fort William Henry——"

"Ah, Lord Howe"— the words were a sigh—"I am glad he does not live to know what I have done—what I was made to do. Perhaps, in heaven he pities and understands." Her voice died in a whisper.

"You condemn yourself too severely," Wolfe remonstrated gently. "From this enforced betrayal I absolve you. Surely, no just man could hold you guilty. Your act, however wrong a statesman might consider it, did credit to your woman's heart. Let the memory die, madam; think of it no more!"

"Oh, you are generous, generous!" her voice broke in a sob. "The first moment I saw you, I thought of the man who was merciful to my kinsmen at Cul-

loden. You, too, were English and a victor, but you had mercy on the vanquished. I have heard it from a child. From my heart I thank you. Now you are merciful again—to one who betrayed you—O God, how unwillingly!—under what cruel pressure of necessity,—and yet—betrayed you!"

And she looked with a pathetic gratitude—a sweet intensity—into the face of England's hero!

In appearance, at least, James Wolfe little justified the name of the British Achilles which he was afterwards to bear. A thin body, with narrow shoulders and slender limbs, and a face whose receding forehead and chin and somewhat upturned nose was redeemed only by the clear sparkling eyes, made an incongruous setting for a master-soul. But the spirit within—the real man—shone through its frail envelope like prisoned flame.

His sensitive, impetuous nature was a strange mingling of fire and tenderness, modesty and resolve. Frank, courteous, and upright, a filial son, and a devoted friend, he was beloved alike by officers and men.

As he stood now in his scarlet coat, with broad cuffs, and wide skirts reaching the knee, his reddish hair tied in a queue, his black three-cornered hat held in his hand, his was not a graceful figure, but it was a commanding one. There was about him, too, a touch of pathos; his fragile body, wasted by disease, his thin face, wearing the pallor of pain and despair, gave a suggestion of portent, of indefinable tragedy.

He responded now with courtesy to the girl's passionate gratitude.

"Madam, I thank you. Culloden is to me a bitter

memory. Your countrymen were noble foes—too noble to have merited such treatment."

"But, madam," he continued, turning to her with a chivalrous pity, "it were cruel to keep you longer exposed to this chill mist. Pray, accompany me to my tent yonder."

Within the tent he poured for her a glass of wine, and mechanically she drank it. She seemed to be moving in a trance—the natural reaction from tension long-endured.

On the table before her a great map lay unfolded, and the sight of it gave her a sharp pang of memory. The scene in that other tent on the shores of St. Sacrement rushed over her in a wave of recollection; and the overwhelming contrast, the sense of irrevocable loss—Lord Howe, her father, Aubrey—smote her cruelly. For an instant all objects blurred before her eyes; she felt herself engulfed in the flood-tide of the past. With a painful effort she roused herself to her present mission, turning to Wolfe a pale resolute face.

"General, in place of the plans I was forced to surrender, I offer you another means to take Quebec: the best—in truth, I think the only way. There is a steep ravine not two miles from the city—here it is," touching the map with her finger;—"'the Anse du Foulon' they call it—it is guarded at the top by Vergor's outpost—but I do not think they will fight. It was that way I came down last night. General Wolfe, your army, landed at that point, can scale those heights, and take Quebec!"

The glow of ardour lent to her white face

a moment's colour; her voice rang out, commanding, thrilling. It was but the ghost, the echo, of the glowing look, the ringing tone, of her who had faced Lord Howe, radiant with youth and hope. The colour faded from her face, the trumpet-vibrance from her voice, displaced by languor and despair. There was no longer left to her any aspiration—any dream.

The light seemed to have passed from her face into Wolfe's. His pain-worn features shone with hope rekindled.

"Madam," he cried, "I had lost all confidence of success, but you summon it anew. I believe you have pointed me the path to victory."

She smiled—a wistful, little smile. "That is my one desire. I can return content."

Wolfe's quick perception caught the sadness of her tone.

"Madam," he said emphatically, "you must not return. It is small earnest of my thanks to promise you security and a safe conduct to your kindred." Then, without waiting for her answer, he continued, smiling, "But I grow forgetful. You and Captain Aubrey are old friends. He would have died for you this morning. I will send him to you."

Powerless to protest against that she both desired and dreaded, Grace waited trembling. It seemed hours ere the canvas curtain, which had fallen at Wolfe's exit, was raised again, and Aubrey stood before her.

Speech was denied to them both. All words were drowned in the torrent of remembrance:—remembered looks; remembered feelings, charged with the

poignant sweetness of the irrevocable. Then, as in that moment when she had saved his life, Aubrey swayed toward her, sank to one knee, and bent above her hands with feverish kisses.

Again, at that loved touch, a quiver of the old-time ecstasy ran through her—she blushed and trembled as she had done that day at St. Frédéric when his arm had stolen round her and he had told his love. The ecstasy was pitifully brief. She was rudely wakened from that dream. She had no longer any right to think of him as a lover;—he was the betrothed of Cicely Van Dersen, that unseen rival whose claim she had never dreamed of challenging. His intended sacrifice had had its birth in chivalry, not love. And she, too, was bound; from her promise to de Valois she had been absolved, but she must keep faith with Flying Swallow at any cost. With heroic effort she brushed away the dreams that clung to her; her right to dream was past. Henceforth she must be awake forever. In drooping face and figure breathed a mute despair—an absolute surrender to fate.

Aubrey, with that scene on the bastion branded on his mind, had but one thought: Grace, deserted by him, had turned in desperation to Flying Swallow. To Aubrey as to Endicott recurred the story of Eunice Williams; and he wildly imagined Grace to be in love with the Indian. But though overcome with horror at this prospect, he felt too utterly self-condemned to remonstrate, or to urge his own penitence,—his own passion. Now that he was about to lose it forever, Aubrey saw the depth and richness

of the nature on which he had set so small a value.

The love-light was in the eyes of both, but alas! to blinded sight it seemed to each a light that shone but for another. . . .

Between them, holding them apart, two figures stood like ghosts: Cicely Van Dersen, haughty and assured, and Flying Swallow, savage yet appealing.

Aubrey spoke without emotion of his visit to the city in disguise, and of her presence on the bastion that fateful night; and equally without emotion she told him what she had already told Wolfe, of that enforced betrayal, thanking him with the grave courtesy due a generous stranger for his chivalry in shielding her from shame. Feeling was too far submerged to show itself in speech. Hope was dead in both their hearts.

Again to Aubrey came the haunting thought that he had never kissed her, and that now, although he had been saved from death, no kiss of his would ever touch her lips. The kiss denied must be denied forever.

That chill September morning was scarce an hour older when the sentry, pacing the bank at Levi, heard the slight splash of a paddle and caught sight, through the shifting mist, of a vague figure in a vanishing canoe. He sent a sharp challenge after the fugitive, then, receiving no reply, leaned a moment on his musket, meditating. "The self-same maid who stole a march on me this morning, I'll take my oath. And now she's gone as she came like a shadow. Faith,

there's a mystery about her! I wonder what she told the General? Something important, I'll swear, for the camp's all astir. Well, what the devil do I care, so we get enough fighting!"

And forthwith he shouldered his musket, and presently the ringing lines

"And ye that love fighting shall soon have enough:
Wolfe commands us, my boys; we shall give them Hot Stuff,"

were floating over that misty river where, in a drifting canoe, a girl crouched, numb with grief.

Grace, her face bowed in her hands, was quivering in the throes of a great temptation—the temptation to accept that security which General Wolfe had offered her.

Though Aubrey loved her not—though the hope of her life would never know fulfilment—still might she not yet find refuge among her mother's people, whom her father had hated and she had so loyally loved? Might she not yet find peace in some New England village, or beside some hearth-stone of Old England, the country of Lord Howe?

Must she return to that beleaguered city? Every sense within her cried out against it. Every power seemed drawing her back to the refuge she had quitted. But a man—an Indian outcast—to whom she had pledged her troth—lay in that ruined city. Duty inexorable was calling her across that shrouded river to death or more desolate life. She sank down shuddering into the canoe, shaking from head to foot with the tearless sobs of a great renunciation.

Meanwhile in a tent on the mist-hidden shore, a man, newly restored to life and honour, buried his head in his hands, moaning out, "Lost! Lost forever! O God, it had been kinder to give me death, believing I had saved her! But now—lost! lost forever!"

XXVIII

ON THE KING'S BASTION

UNDER cover of the friendly mist Grace returned as she had come, eluding with wilderness skill the sentry on the strand, and passing as before, the outpost above in the guise of an Indian girl.

Near the edge of the cliff, on almost the very spot where she had knelt in passionate appeal that evening of despair, she nearly stumbled upon Flying Swallow lying prostrate in the wet grass. He had followed her as far as his still feeble strength permitted and then had dragged himself to the very verge of the cliff to await her return. It was only with the aid of her arm that he struggled to his feet, and thus the two slowly crossed the stretch of meadow-land known as the Plains of Abraham.

A week had passed,—a week fraught with the deepest import in the destinies of Quebec. Acting upon the information Grace had given him, Wolfe had made immediate preparations to attack at the Anse du Foulon. To accomplish this, however, much stratagem was required in order that the ever-vigilant Montcalm should have no suspicions of his purpose. Accordingly Wolfe, having abandoned his camp at Montmorenci, began a skilful massing of his troops above

the town where they were soon embarked on the ships which lay at anchor in the river; and here, on the evening of September 5th, their commander joined them. Henceforth the fleet passed ceaselessly up and down with the tide, threatening to land at any point, and keeping the enemy in constant motion.

Naturally the French were mystified. The lateness of the season furnished the most obvious key to these movements; the English, checkmated at every turn, were undoubtedly preparing to abandon the campaign. Yet, despite this belief, Montcalm did not relax his vigilance. He slept clothed and booted, with horses ready saddled; his troops lay under arms; he redoubled his outposts above Quebec. For the nearer heights he did not dream of fearing. "We need not suppose," he wrote to Vaudreuil, "that the enemy have wings." Yet wings, in a sense, they had; the wings of an indomitable resolution which lift a man or an army to victory.

Early evening of the 10th of September found Grace again upon the King's Bastion, searching with anxious eyes the line of river. In her mind was a piteous mingling of elation and despair: should the English take Quebec, it would mean for her not deliverance, but sacrifice. For she and Flying Swallow had determined that on the day the English stormed the city they would attempt their escape. Once beyond pursuit, they could be married by a mission priest before they plunged into the wilderness never to return.

Though all else in her life had left her, still there remained to her duty—a steadfast star by which to

light her solitary path. Yet duty was to love as the cold purity of Vega beside the burning radiance of Sirius. Fate in the form of a distorted sense of duty was driving her to an act of desperation. She believed that in marrying Flying Swallow she would not only pay a debt of gratitude, but might perhaps win the Indian's soul to Christ, and thus propitiate destiny and atone for her father's sin. This feeling of fatality was a strange echo of predestination. The shadow—with Alan Stuart crime and retribution—for her assumed the shape of renunciation and atonement. The sins of the father had, indeed, been visited upon the child.

To-night, leaning wistful-eyed upon the ramparts, she thought: "Since Flying Swallow could say, 'It is easier to die than betray,' so must I say, 'It is easier to die than to be false.' He offered his life for me; it is a life I owe him. I have lived always in the shadow, even before I knew it. If God has so willed it, why should I not walk in the shadow to the end? Surely it is better to walk with duty in the shadow than to walk without it in the sun."

Then her mind went back to the days when her path had lain only in the sun—those sweet days at Fort St. Frédéric—that loved spot where wilderness and civilization blent in such perfection. Dream-days they were—pearls forever hidden in the sacred treasure-house of memory. She could not even bear to think of returning to St. Frédéric now. On the old wilderness trail it had been far otherwise, but there she had thought of return in the light of the hope that her father was yet living, and that they would soon resume

their old sweetly idyllic life in the shadow of the fleur-de-lis.

But now—not St. Frédéric but the pathless wilderness forever. Since her dream of life was shattered, for what was there left to pray, save early death and a forest grave? . . .

Her mournful reverie was interrupted by a stir behind her, and she turned suddenly to face Rupert de Valois.

Though the city around them was plunged in ruin and distress, no effect was visible upon the Duke. He kept unchanged his heartless insouciant gaiety, as he kept his jewelled orders and his dazzling uniform, though a state was toppling to its fall. He laughed softly as he caught sight of Grace, and came quickly to her side. She moved away from him a little, but without the shrinking she had always shown, and his mocking smile gave place to lifted brows. Why did she no longer fear him?

He did not try to solve the mystery. With his old abandon he seized her hands, and looked into her face.

"Why so mournful, fair one, and why this sombre dress instead of festive white?—The bridal eve is not so far away."

His words were cruelly exultant. She realized anew that she would rather a thousand times become the wife of Flying Swallow than give herself to this dissolute man in such hideous mockery of marriage.

But she faced him with cold composure, and at this his exultation changed suddenly to anger. This much of power over her her fear had given him, and he had lost it. He ground his teeth in rage.

"So you dare defy me!" he cried, crushing her hands in his furious grasp. "Remember your promise, belle amie, to wed me on the day the English leave Quebec defeated! Mon Dieu, I think that day is near! Your Monsieur Wolfe has failed in his enterprise;—perhaps he needed certain papers."

A strange smile crossed her face. "Whether he has failed or no remains to be seen. But do you, monsieur, remember that on the day you violated your promise to spare the life of Flying Swallow, I, too, was absolved from obligation."

An excess of rage seized de Valois. "Flying Swallow—that worm I would have ground into the dust—what is he to you—this Indian dog?"

She straightened herself proudly. "Oh, you need not scoff—he is of as royal blood as you—a descendant of Algonquin kings. And he is this to me—that I prefer to marry him than to marry the Duke de Valois."

For a moment her words produced upon de Valois the effect of a blow. Then, recovering himself, he caught her savagely in his arms.

"You are mine! mine! No Indian vagabond shall ever take you from me!"

The dusk, deepening now to the first stars, was broken only by a band of torchlight, streaming out upon them from the courtyard. In the instant that she struggled free of his grasp, Grace, her ears trained to Indian keenness, was conscious of a figure approaching stealthily from behind. Another moment, and Flying Swallow sprang with panther agility upon de Valois. With a lightning swiftness he raised the

knife, but her impulse of mercy was swifter still. She saw the flash of the lifted knife, and caught the hand that held it ere it fell. Swift as she was, she failed to avert the blow entirely, but its force was greatly lessened, so much so that de Valois received only a slight flesh-wound instead of the mortal thrust.

It was now Flying Swallow whom danger threatened. For the Duke, with a furious oath, wrenched his pistol free, and so close were the combatants that its muzzle almost touched the Indian's breast. Flying Swallow, armed only with a knife, was at his mercy. But in that breathless moment Grace sprang between them, clutching the Duke's wrist with desperate might. Vainly did de Valois seek to wrest the pistol free from hands which clung to him with supple woodland strength. And while he strove with curses to break her grasp, she cried to Flying Swallow in the Abnaki tongue, "For God's sake, fly, my brother,—to stay means certain death!"

Flying Swallow, thus implored, obeyed, just as the Duke, breaking from the girl's exhausted hold, discharged his pistol; with a single agile movement leaped the parapet and disappeared. Grace, with face hidden and lips moving in voiceless prayer, leaned weakly against the wall as, hoarse with futile rage, de Valois roused the guard; and scarce a minute later, every sentry within call along the ramparts was blazing wildly at a dark speck moving rapidly across the moonlit river.

She saw the uplifted knife flash in the air, and caught the hand that held it ere it fell

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XXIX

THE EVE OF VICTORY

IT was the evening of Wednesday, September 12,—the night appointed for the attack. Aboard his flagship, the "Sutherland," anchored in mid-stream off Cap Rouge, eight miles above Quebec, Wolfe and his officers held their last council. The swinging cabin-lantern threw a flickering light over the faces gathered about the table, Wolfe, pale but composed, dominating the group with the energy of the master-spirit. Only once was any opposition offered to his plans, when an officer protested that to attempt to scale such heights in the darkness did not seem to him feasible, and instantly came Wolfe's reply: "Where a girl can come down an army can go up."

To a man, the soldiers trusted and adored their general, and were on their mettle for any enterprise, however daring. "Nay, how could it be otherwise," Sergeant John Johnson of the 58th quaintly observed, "being at the heels of gentlemen whose whole thirst, equal with their general, was for glory?"

Although all on board knew a movement was impending, only the higher officers knew whither. Colonel Howe of the light infantry called for volunteers to lead the desperate enterprise, promising "that if any of us survived, we might depend on being recommended to the General"; and instantly twenty-four

men—among them Aubrey—sprang forward in response. Thirty batteaux and several smaller boats were moored alongside the ships; and in these, late that night, the regiments embarked, the twenty-four volunteers occupying the foremost boat.

On Wolfe, doomed and dying, Fortune, so long inexorable, smiled at last. Every chance, every circumstance, fitted into a rare mosaic of success. Deserters had told him that at ebb tide that night a convoy of provision-boats would be sent down the river to Montcalm; then this order had been countermanded, while the French sentries stationed along the heights had received the order but not the countermand; furthermore, Captain de Vergor, in command at the Anse du Foulon, had allowed the greater part of his men to return home to harvest their fields, on condition that his own fields be included, while he himself relaxed his vigilance and went to bed; the battalion of Guienne, which had had orders to occupy the Plains of Abraham, had, instead, remained on the other side of the city; and finally—Bougainville, the French commander at Cap Rouge, when, a few hours later, he saw the English ships drift down-stream, made no attempt to follow them with his exhausted troops, expecting that they would, as usual, return at high-tide.

On such a slender thread of circumstance the future hung. Had there been a single break in that chain of coincidences, how different might have been the outcome of that battle at dawn.

Meantime—while every event was tending toward his immortal fame—Wolfe, aboard the "Sutherland," awaited the hour of embarkation. His only com-

panion was his former schoolmate, John Jervis, commander of the sloop-of-war, "Porcupine," and later Earl St. Vincent. As they sat in the dimly-lighted cabin, with the ship swaying to the rhythmic rise and fall of the water, Wolfe, his pale face grave with a great foreshadowing, took from his bosom a miniature of Miss Katherine Lowther, his betrothed, saying solemnly, "Jervis, I am confident I shall die in to-morrow's battle, and I charge you to carry this to her."

About two o'clock came ebb-tide, and the wind freshened, blowing down the river. Suddenly, two lanterns showed in the maintop shrouds of the "Sutherland,"—the awaited signal. Drifting lightly with the current, without dip of paddle or creak of oar, the boats began to move, that of Wolfe leading, and the ships with the rest of the army following.

It was a night of stars and stillness, faintly lit by the restless flicker of fireflies and the glimmer of those other fireflies, the camp-fires upon either shore. As they advanced, Aubrey found himself in the boat next the General's,—so near that in the starlit darkness he could distinguish the outlines of his face. He saw Wolfe turn to a young midshipman beside him,—and say "How old are you, sir?"

"Seventeen, sir," was the answer.

"It is the most lasting passion," Wolfe said thoughtfully, and Aubrey doubted not he spoke of love of country.

There fell a pause broken only by the heavy booming of a thirty-two pounder on Point Levi reverberating up the heights.

Then Wolfe began to repeat, in a low impressive

voice, to the officers round him, the words of Gray's immortal Elegy:—

"The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

. . . . . .

"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power;
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Await alike th' inevitable hour—
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

A strange thrill of prescience ran through Aubrey at the closing lines. Afterward, when Wolfe's own fate had proved those words prophetic, he was often to recall that hour.

In the silence that followed the recital, Aubrey's meditations unconsciously assumed the mournful cadence of the Elegy. From the moment that Grace had left him in the tent on Point Levi—that moment when he knew her lost to him forever—he had longed to die. To-night that longing was intensified; his thoughts dwelt constantly on the fate of Lord Howe, and he prayed for a death like his at Ticonderoga.

With a poignant bitterness he brooded on the marriage of Grace to the Abnaki. To be sure, Flying Swallow would not ill-treat her;—for all his stubborn clinging to his father's faith, refinement embodied in Grace had insensibly softened and moulded him. Aubrey knew that although the Abnaki would ruthlessly kill an enemy, he would no less zealously protect a friend; that although he would never forget an injury, he would, accordingly, never forget a kindness.

But for all this he shuddered at the thought of such a fate for her—the fate at which Lord Howe had shuddered. . . . Under the hardships of the forest life her youth and beauty would fade and perish as flowers fade beneath a burning sun.

He could never have given her what Lord Howe could have given:—the coronet, the castle, the noble name; but he could at least have given her reasonable comfort and refuge from danger. And now, through him, she was doomed to a fate so hideous that death would be sweet beside it. . . . Oh, the unassuaged pang of remorse! Surely he had paid to the uttermost for his boyish cruelty and neglect! . . .

For two long hours—hours that to Aubrey seemed eternity—the boats drifted slowly down the river. At last the tide swung the foremost shoreward, and the frowning wall of forest loomed above them in the darkness. Suddenly, the silence was broken by the challenging "Qui vive?" ringing down from the heights.

"La France," replied an officer of Fraser's Highlanders who had learned fluent French in the campaigns in Holland.

"À quel régiment?"

"De la Reine," the Scotsman answered, adding quickly, "we are the provision-boats. Don't make a noise; the English will hear us." The sentry, expecting the convoy, was completely deceived; and did not demand the countersign.

Presently they passed the headland above the Anse du Foulon, and the boats of the light infantry were swept to shore on the strong tide. Disembarking on

the narrow beach, Aubrey and his comrades began the steep ascent, followed by a supporting party. Up they toiled in the thick darkness that precedes the dawn, moving with stealthy caution lest snapping twig or loosened pebble betray their presence to the foe above. Beside them, in the depths of the ravine, a little brook —the Ruisseau St. Denis—rippled softly in the stillness. There was no other sound.

Suddenly, as they climbed, Aubrey became strangely conscious of a form at his side,—a figure that watched him openly, but gave no sign of recognition. The darkness was beginning to melt imperceptibly into the grey of dawn, and by the pallid light Aubrey looked, recoiling, into the face of Flying Swallow. He had not been aware of the Abnaki's presence in the English camp, nor of his offer to guide the expedition up the heights. And now to meet him thus!—Instinctively, he shrank a little. They had not met face to face since that day when they confronted each other on the threshold at Albany. The Indian's impassive features gave no token of the Nemesis that lurked behind the masque. With an enigmatical look he sprang ahead, leaving Aubrey to follow with the rest.

Quickly they reached the summit, where the tents of Vergor's outpost were visible in the dim light. The French offered little resistance, and presently a lusty British cheer, mingled with scattered musket-shots, proclaimed to Wolfe below that his daring volunteers had scaled the heights. He gave the order; the troops sprang from the boats, and up the steep ravine, clutching for support at trees and bushes, their muskets slung upon their backs, rushed his resolute battalions, swift,

indomitable. Tradition still marks the spot where the foremost reached the summit. Wolfe said to an officer near him: "You can try it, but I don't think you'll get up;" yet he, himself, with a superhuman effort, dragged his frail body up beside his men.

In the grey mist of morning, Montcalm, galloping headlong from his camp at Beauport, which all night long had been threatened by the ships of Admiral Saunders—a successful feint to divert suspicion from the real point of attack—saw outspread before him on the Plains of Abraham the scarlet regiments of Britain, interspersed with the fluttering tartans and skirling bagpipes of the Highlanders—Wolfe's army challenging him to mortal combat. The conflict could no longer be deferred; the inevitable hour,—for England and for France, for Wolfe and for Montcalm,—had come at last.

XXX

"TH' INEVITABLE HOUR"

MEANTIME, Philip Aubrey, who had joined in the rout of Vergor's men, found himself almost alone on the wooded verge of the cliff. Pausing for breath, he leaned upon his sword, oblivious for the moment of his surroundings. He did not see a figure steal stealthily out of the underbrush behind him and halt not a stone's throw distant. He did not dream of danger lurking in his shadow.

Yet Flying Swallow's hour had come. The place was favourable. They were a little apart from the rest; and for the moment they were virtually alone—not that the Indian would have hesitated, though an army had been present to avenge the deed. The savage purpose deepened in Flying Swallow's heart; the renegade should pay at last for his inconstancy; Aubrey should never enter Quebec alive.

With the noiseless gliding motion of his race, he approached his unconscious victim, only his glittering eyes betraying any feeling. He had crept so near that he could almost look over the other's shoulder, yet Aubrey did not move or turn. Again, as on that threshold at Albany, Flying Swallow's hand clenched upon his knife, but now with a deeper hatred, a more vindictive purpose. Here there would be no chance of failure as before; Nature, too, was savage; she would offer no

refuge for the guilty. There was no rock or tree behind which Flying Swallow's knife could not seek out his prey. The ghost of an exultant smile flitted over the pitiless face. . . .

Then, suddenly, Aubrey sighed, and spoke below his breath: "Grace,—sweetheart—why should I care to live when I have lost you? But if death come to me, as I have prayed, I shall die with your sweet name upon my lips—my Grace, my little Grace of God!"

His voice broke in a sob, and he buried his head in his hands. Flying Swallow, noiseless, moved away. No perceptible change had crossed his impassive features, yet a change there was in him. As he disappeared into the underbrush, he turned, looking back at the unconscious man whose blood had so nearly stained his knife. "White Dawn," he murmured, "White Dawn, her heart is with him,—she is not for Flying Swallow."

Wolfe marshalled his battalions along the heights they had so boldly mounted, while he himself went forward to reconnoitre. A little distance brought him to the Plains of Abraham, named for Abraham Martin, a pilot called "Mâitre Abraham," who had owned this land in the early days of the colony. A grassy plateau, dotted with cornfields and clumps of bushes, they extended from the Anse du Foulon to the gates of Quebec; and here Wolfe formed his regiments in line of battle, facing the city.

Yet although the most daring part of his undertaking had been accomplished, his present position was extremely dangerous. His army was threatened on

the one side by the garrison of Quebec and the troops of Montcalm, and on the other by the French force at Cap Rouge. To retreat was impossible; victory or ruin were the only alternatives. But the hero-soul of Wolfe knew no flinching.

The morning was dark and misty, threatening rain. Swiftly the English regiments took their places in ranks three deep, Wolfe, himself, commanding the foremost line.

Suddenly on the ridge of broken ground between them and the city appeared the white uniforms of the battalion of Guienne, arriving all too late at the position they had been ordered to take the day before.

Behind them swept the forces of Montcalm—a stirring spectacle. Out they streamed through the gates; —white coats of La Sarre, Béarn, and Languedoc; Indians in war-paint and feathers; dark-clad gesticulating habitants, *coureurs de bois* in the picturesque hunters' dress.

At their head rode Montcalm, his fine face rigid with determination. Although a considerable number of his army had not rallied to his support, he resolved to attack the enemy immediately, before they could entrench themselves or receive reinforcements. His men were burning with an ardour which he would not permit to cool. He spoke to them in his swift, intense fashion.

"How well I remember how he looked," an old Canadian, then a boy of eighteen, would tell long afterwards; "he rode a black horse along the front of our lines, brandishing his sword, as if to excite us to do our duty. He wore a coat with wide sleeves, which

fell back as he raised his arm, and showed the white linen of the wristband."

Meanwhile, a fusillade of shots began to pour upon the English from the French sharpshooters, concealed behind every bush and grainfield, but they waited patiently, making no attempt to return the fire, not even when three field-pieces, brought from the Palace battery, opened on them with roundshot and canister. For they knew—these intrepid Britons—that nothing this day could be done rashly. The stake was far too great for that: a nation's destiny was in the balance. This day would decide forever the supremacy of Britain in this land beyond the sea.

Everywhere Wolfe moved, calm and resolute, complete master of himself and of his men. Why they loved him so an incident of that morning well illustrates: One of his officers had been badly wounded, and upon regaining consciousness, found the General standing by his side. Wolfe grasped his hand, told him not to lose hope, praised his courage and promised him promotion whatever fate befell himself.

About ten o'clock Wolfe perceived, from the higher ground of the right wing, that the hour of conflict had arrived. The enemy were advancing in three columns, the regiments of Old France in the centre, commanded by Montcalm himself.

They came forward rapidly, with eager shouts, two columns moving toward the left, the other toward the right;—beginning to fire obliquely as soon as they arrived within range. At Wolfe's command his army rose, loading their muskets with an extra ball, and stood expectant, a motionless red rampart, ominously

still, yet tense with smouldering rage. Minutes passed. Then came the order:—"Forward!" The English troops advanced a little distance, and again halted, motionless beneath the rain of musketry.

Finally, when the French had approached within forty paces, Wolfe raised his sword, the word of command rang down the waiting line and the British muskets answered as one man. With fearful precision the shots pealed out like one tremendous cannonade; and quickly following, a second volley, delivered in the same terrific unison. The smoke lifted, and a flicker of sunlight showed the army of Montcalm retreating headlong—a spent white wave, receding, shattered, from a rock-girt shore.

Then Wolfe gave the command to charge; and above that dreadful field rang the exultant British cheer, mingled with the fiery Highland slogan and the wild challenge of the war-pipes. Forward the English pressed, with musket and with bayonet; in the forefront, the claymores of the Highlanders flashing out bright death to many a valiant soldier of La Sarre.

In the first moments of the charge, Aubrey, with the Royal Americans on the left of the line, caught a fleeting glimpse of Wolfe, pressing forward, sword in hand, at the head of the Louisbourg grenadiers; then the rushing columns came between him and the gallant figure.

Aubrey, engulfed in the onset of the English lines, was soon engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with the soldiers of the regiment, La Sarre, which composed Montcalm's right wing.

As he desperately thrust and parried, defending

himself against the attack of those who sought to rally their retreating comrades, there rushed upon him a figure he had little dreamed of encountering. For he naturally had not known of the transfer of Rupert de Valois from the regiment La Reine in which he had served at Ticonderoga to that of La Sarre; and accordingly when the Duke confronted him, he was absolutely taken by surprise and stood a moment motionless.

But recovering himself, he sprang with swift agility to meet the sweeping thrust of de Valois' sword; and himself assuming the aggressive, compelled the Duke to give ground. The combat soon became desperate, for both were skilful swordsmen; not only enemies in war but rivals in love; and Aubrey had never forgotten the Duke's threat to imprison him in the dungeons of St. Frédéric. Wounds were given and received, yet neither showed the slightest sign of yielding.

At last Aubrey began to weaken. With increasingly perceptible effort, he parried his opponent's blows. It was evident that the encounter must soon end fatally for him; any moment might bring the mortal thrust.

At this point there occurred a startling interruption. A wild figure in beaded deerskin fought his way through the mêlée, and, pushing aside the exhausted Aubrey, made the duel with de Valois his own.

A tenfold more desperate struggle now began between the French noble and the fierce Algonquin. It was sword against sword no longer, but sword against knife, and though the courtier had amazing skill, the Indian had the lightning agility of the woods. Yet, in

a sense, the two were equal, for the Duke's partial exhaustion was neutralized by the Abnaki's recent torture.

Flying Swallow fought against France, embodied in this cruel courtier;—the country that had crushed his sister in her hour of bloom, and treacherously slain his father, and had brought unnumbered sorrows to his foster-sister.

At last the end came: the Duke, utterly exhausted, staggered back, the sword falling from his relaxing grasp. Flying Swallow seized the advantage. He poised above de Valois the intercepted knife of the King's Bastion.—Here was no gentle hand to avert the blow; the hour of de Valois' doom had come. . . . What energies were those that nerved the Abnaki's arm!—Retribution for the death of a father, for the murder of a sister, but, above all, vengeance for the torture of the woman he loved.—With all his force he struck. Rupert de Valois' grasp relaxed. He sank back. . . . The falcon of France would never swoop again. The maiden doves were safe.

Weak with wounds and exhaustion, Aubrey struggled to his feet, but when he turned to accost his preserver the Indian had disappeared.

The field was now almost cleared of victors and vanquished, and marvelling much at his escape, and at that which had changed Flying Swallow from an enemy to a friend, he made his way toward the rear.

It was then that he learned the fate of his commander: Wolfe, leading the right wing in the charge, had received a bullet which shattered his wrist, but he

hid this wound with his handkerchief. A second shot struck him, but he still pressed forward. In a few moments, however, a musket-ball pierced his breast. He staggered and sank to the ground. Lieutenant Brown of the Grenadiers and two other soldiers bore him in their arms to the rear, and asked if he would have a surgeon.

"There's no need," he murmured, "it's all over with me."

"They run; see how they run!" exclaimed Lieutenant Brown, who supported the dying General.

"Who run?" Wolfe demanded, like one suddenly roused from sleep.

"The enemy, sir. Egad, they give way everywhere!"

"Go, one of you, to Colonel Burton," cried Wolfe with an energy that stayed his passing soul; "tell him to march Webb's regiment down to the St. Charles to cut off their retreat from the bridge." Then, yielding at last to death, he turned upon his side and whispered, "Now, God be praised, I will die in peace!" A moment more, and the bravest heart in Britain had ceased to beat.

Meanwhile, Montcalm, vainly attempting to rally his shattered troops, had been borne headlong on the surge of their wild retreat. Suddenly, as he approached the town, a shot passed through his body, but he bravely kept his seat in the saddle, and, supported by a soldier on each side, rode slowly through the St. Louis gate. Just within, an excited crowd awaited tidings of the battle. One of them,—a woman—recognized the drooping figure, and at sight of the streaming blood

cried wildly: "My God! My God! The Marquis is killed!"

But, with unfailing courage, Montcalm replied: "It is nothing, it is nothing, do not distress yourselves for me, my good friends."

Still mounted on his black horse he passed painfully along the Rue St. Louis to the home of the surgeon Arnoux, whose brother examined the wound and pronounced it fatal.

"How long have I to live?" asked Montcalm.

"Twelve hours perhaps," was the answer.

"So much the better," Montcalm replied. "I am happy that I shall not live to see the surrender of Quebec."

At daybreak his heroic soul passed peacefully to its reward.

In the dusk of that evening a mournful procession traversed the shattered street to the chapel of the Ursulines, where, beneath the convent-wall, a bursting shell had hollowed out a fitting grave. No bells were tolled, no cannon boomed. Amid the silence of despair, the body, by the light of torches, was lowered into the shell-wrought grave. Then, suddenly, from all that company—priests, officers, and townspeople—there burst a storm of sobs and tears. It was the requiem of New France.

Thus died Montcalm and Wolfe; both men of noble character, of lofty soul. Both had fought with an unflinching courage; both had won imperishable fame. And now to victor and to vanquished had come a mutual peace, a mutual glory.

XXXI

THE RING OF FLAME

ALL that morning Grace gazed feverishly from her window towards the distant battlefield. The shots at daybreak had warned her that the attack had commenced, and it was with a wildly beating heart, and with a prayer trembling on her lips, that she awaited the outcome of that enterprise to which she herself had pointed the way. At last she could bear the suspense no longer; and, wrapping her plaid around her, she joined the frantic crowd of townspeople who were hurrying toward the St. Louis gate. Borne thither on this frenzied tide, she beheld the entrance of Montcalm, mortally wounded, and quickly perceived from the demoralized troops pressing after him that the victory of Wolfe had been complete.

In a strange dream of triumph and despair she retraced her steps through the streets of the beleaguered town. Wolfe had conquered, and the hour of her sacrifice was at hand.

Twilight found her again at the window, still wrapped in mournful reverie. Suddenly, out of the dusk emerged a figure which rested a hand on the sill and vaulted lightly into the room. Flying Swallow, looming large in the shadows, stood before her. A moment of deep silence——

Then, "Le Général Wolfe is dead," said Flying Swallow.

She made an exclamation, "O God—that brave and noble man! It was death with victory I brought him."

"Le Capitaine Aubrey lives," said Flying Swallow presently.

Despite herself her breath came quickly, and her hands clasped themselves against her heart. "Thank God!" she murmured.

With a quick movement she turned to Flying Swallow. As she did so the chain suspended from her neck caught upon the handle of his knife and wrenched apart; and looking down she saw by the faint light that the string of purple wampum, symbol of the bond between them, lay broken at her feet.

Flying Swallow stooped and put the shattered chain into her hands.

"It is broken—the promise is broken between White Dawn and Flying Swallow.—We go not to the wilderness. Soon le capitaine comes."

And before she could recover from her bewilderment she was standing alone in the fast-darkening room, with a broken chain of wampum in her hands.

The battle on the Plains of Abraham settled forever the fate of New France. The faded golden rod which flecked the battlefield was like the golden lilies on the citadel, soon to fade before the English cross. Five days later, on the 18th of September, 1759, Quebec surrendered, and on the afternoon of that day the victorious army entered the conquered city, and set their guards at her gates. From above the citadel fell

the golden lilies, never again to float above a fortress of New France.

Among the first to enter was Philip Aubrey. As, heavy-hearted, he approached the palace of de Valois, he caught sight of Grace at a window. Only for an instant did he hesitate. Then he vaulted the steps and, with a little cry, she turned from the window to meet him.

A pitiful hesitation held them mute, but only for a moment, for what she read in his eyes broke the spell. She took a step towards him, faltering out, "Philip, something Flying Swallow told me——" and broke off, seemingly unable to finish.

The look of yearning in her eyes spoke for her. Hope leaped up, new-born, in Aubrey's heart.

"Grace, sweetheart, do you love me still,—in spite of all?"

A radiant smile crossed her face. "I never ceased to love you, Philip, even when I thought you——"

But again she did not finish. For Aubrey caught her in his arms, and what she might have said was smothered against his breast.

There followed broken explanations that died in happy silences. The heavy mists of blind misunderstanding, that had clung around them for so long, were cleared away at last.

Presently a voice aroused them, and Aubrey, turning, beheld the chaplain of his regiment in the doorway. He laughed, the merry boyish laugh that none had heard upon his lips for many months.

"Sir, your coming is indeed providential. Will you not marry Miss Stuart and me at once?"

Accordingly, the good man—that same chaplain who had attended Aubrey on the night when death had seemed so near—opened his prayer-book, and spoke the words that made them man and wife. And so it was that the first kiss that passed between them was the marriage-kiss as they stood before the chaplain.

Though Quebec lay in ruins around them—shattered church and crumbling mansion bearing ghastly evidence of siege—their own joy was too great to feel depression. The brilliant autumn passed in a rapture, strangely dreamlike. They had been sundered so long by destiny that even now they could hardly realize the reality of their union.

Late in October the fleet of Admiral Saunders sailed for home, in its midst the ship, "Royal William," bearing the body of Wolfe to its honoured burial in Westminster. When the news of the capture of Quebec became known in England, a surge of mingled feeling swept the country. Horace Walpole thus described the effect of "the touching and inspiring story" of Wolfe's heroic death:

"The incidents of dramatic fiction could not be conducted with more address to lead an audience from despondency to sudden exaltation than accident prepared to excite the passions of a whole people. They despaired, they triumphed, and they wept; for Wolfe had fallen in the hour of victory."

"England blazed with bonfires. In one spot alone all was dark and silent; for here a widowed mother mourned for a loving and devoted son, and the people forebade to profane her grief with the clamour of their rejoicings."

But if Old England had cause for joy, how much greater was that of New England! From New Hampshire to the Carolinas her pulpits rang with sermons of thanksgiving. Among others, Jonathan Mayhew, a young but famous minister of Boston, portrayed with glowing ardour the future of the Thirteen Colonies, "with the continent thrown open before them," and predicted that "with the continued blessing of Heaven, they will become in another century or two a mighty empire." His prophecy was true. "With the triumph of Wolfe on the Plains of Abraham began the history of the United States."

Early in December Philip Aubrey received the promotion which Wolfe had promised, accompanied by an order transferring him to Albany; and despite the severity of the northern winter, he and Grace set out at once on the journey southward. But the drifted roads and frozen trails made slow travelling, and the days had lengthened into weeks before they crossed the Canadian boundary. The sight of Lake Champlain, in its snowy setting of mountains, recalled to Grace the memory of her dismal journey as the captive of de Valois a twelvemonth earlier.

Flying Swallow had accompanied Grace and Philip thus far. They clung to him and he to them with an intense tenacity, though they knew that he would never return to civilization with them. With Grace the childhood bond was ineffaceable, and it was doubly strengthened by suffering and vicissitude. Nor with Aubrey was the bond less strong, for he felt that he

owed to the generosity of Flying Swallow not only his life, but Grace as well.

It was Christmas Eve when they reached Pointe de la Couronne, where they were to rest for the night. But Fort St. Frédéric no longer offered shelter. Since July it had been the mass of crumbling ruins it remains to-day, for the French, retreating before the advance of Amherst, had preferred to blow their stronghold into atoms rather than surrender it. As for the little settlement on Bulwagga Bay, where the cabin of Alan Stuart had once stood, that, too, was utter desolation—a heap of shattered walls to mark those happy hearthstones.

But southward from St. Frédéric—between it and Lord Amherst's half-completed fort, on the grassy space once used as a parade-ground, a temporary blockhouse had been built. It was indeed rude shelter, but it was all that offered, and here they decided to spend the night.

But before entering the blockhouse, Grace insisted upon visiting the ruins of St. Frédéric, tracing with pensive eagerness the outlines of trench and sallyport, water-gate and bastions, and pausing with brimming eyes before the heap of stones that had been Father Caron's chapel.

"Dear Father Caron," she sighed, remembering his words concerning Flying Swallow. "Your wish is not yet fulfilled, but oh, pray God, it may be before long!"

What memories the place evoked! Here she and Philip had walked as lovers twenty months before; here he had spoken the first words of love; here they

had plighted their troth. Though the sweet green slopes were hidden deep in snow, and an icy wind swept the lake, Grace caught a vision of soft blue skies and April verdure.

Within the blockhouse they gathered round the great hearth-fire, oblivious to the howling wind that stormed the rude walls, or the snow that filtered in through the chinks in the logs. A small company of Amherst's men assembled round the fire, peacefully smoking their pipes, between whiffs relating tales of the Indian Wars. Grace and Philip, sitting silent in the chimney-corner, were lost in memories and hopes as golden as the firelight that played upon their faces. Near them crouched Flying Swallow; dark face and figure outlined sharply against the leap of the flames. What memories possessed him who can tell! His face betrayed no sign.

The evening had worn away to ten o'clock when a sharp knock fell upon the blockhouse door. The intruder proved to be a messenger from General Amherst, requesting Major Aubrey's presence at an outpost some five miles distant. With a deeply disquieted look, Aubrey rose.

"Sweetheart," he said, turning to Grace, "I am loth to leave you in this rude place, and yet this order——"

"And I am loth to have you go. But, Philip, it would never do,"—she tried to speak lightly,—"to tell General Amherst that you refused to obey him because your wife had fears. I am perfectly safe. And here is Flying Swallow to protect me."

Still reluctant, Aubrey yielded, kissed Grace good-bye, and mounted the horse that awaited him.

A strange shiver ran through her, as she heard the hoofs die away, but she quickly repressed it. "Why should I be so timid,—I who am used to dangers?" she questioned herself reprovingly, but the fear remained.

Presently she took a candle and climbed the ladder-like wooden stair to her rude chamber. For long she sat thinking, listening to the wailing of the wind, and wondering upon the nature of the errand that had called Philip forth. He had said he would surely return before dawn. Drowsiness stole upon her, yet some strange instinct seemed to combat desire for sleep. But at last her head drooped to her arm, and she drifted into unconsciousness.

Below-stairs the soldiers had dispersed, leaving one man on guard by the fire. He lolled back in his seat, pipe in mouth, drowsily enjoying the warmth and comfort.—What need to keep vigilant watch on such a night when no enemy was about! He drew a bottle toward him and took a lingering drink, and presently another. . . . His head sank forward on his arms. The candle on the table guttered low. For a time his stupefied senses perceived nothing, but suddenly he imagined that the moan of the wind about the place was a voice calling him.

Under this impression he staggered up, and taking the candle, lurched toward the door. Near it stood several kegs of powder, and the man in his unsteady movements stumbled over them. The candle dropped from his shaking hand. . . . There was a puff of

smoke, a blinding flash, a loud concussion, and the whole place seemed suddenly aflame. With frantic curses he reeled toward the door.

Grace was gradually roused by a pungent odour which seemed to fill the room. Dazed, she started up, to find herself hemmed in by a circle of fire. She took a swaying step toward the ladder which furnished the only means of descent, only to recoil before the ascending gush of flame which made the narrow opening a fiery well.

With a piteous cry she staggered back. Her only way of escape was cut off. There was nothing left for her but death—a dreadful death. As, gasping, she retreated step by step, while the flames crept about her, she was strangely transported to that similar scene of her childhood, and though she knew there was no slightest hope of his reaching her, she cried Flying Swallow's name through the flames that encircled her as she had cried it in the burning forest. . . . But she could breathe no longer in the stifling vapour. . . . Consciousness was slipping from her. Blindly she groped for the chain about her neck;—the slender silver chain, Aubrey's gift, which had displaced the shattered wampum;—with her last conscious movement touched the crucifix to her lips, and breathed the name of Christ. . . .

Flying Swallow, asleep with the soldiers on the lower floor of the blockhouse, was wakened from a dream of "White Dawn" to hear her voice crying his name. All the barriers that sundered them were swept away—the barriers of race and religion and the marriage-bond itself. He heard only the call of White

Dawn—his soul's mate—and he rushed to her through the surging flames.

With a superhuman strength he forced his way up the burning ladder—plunged through that sea of fire, and seized her in his arms.

Again the fateful prophecy had been fulfilled: they stood encompassed by the ring of flame.

XXXII

"THROUGH DARKNESS UP TO GOD"

THOUGH the fiery breath of the flames scorched his cheek, Flying Swallow did not flinch. He crushed Grace to him, pressing her face against his shoulder that she might not breathe the deadly vapour. Around them surged and eddied that burning tide, but Flying Swallow, clasping White Dawn to his breast, stood as tranquil as in his native forest.

There was a moment of lightning choice,—then the Abnaki with his precious burden plunged again into that sea of flame. The watchers, helpless, saw him descend the blazing stair, unbending as a pine; a figure magnified to giant size. There were great gaps in the walls now. . . . Through the shifting smoke they saw him stagger, recover himself,—spring forward, and emerge, bearing in his arms the woman he had given his life to save. Yes—even that—for in the moment that he passed the door, when eager hands had eased him of his burden, he staggered heavily, and fell to the ground. The flame he had inhaled was fatal . . . he was dying fast.

With a piteous cry, Grace sank to her knees beside him, pillowing his head upon her breast, and sobbing out: "O God, my brother! My brother, Flying Swallow. You have given your life for mine!"

Over his dark face, blanched with death, flashed a

transfiguring smile. "It is nothing, White Dawn, . . . I am glad."

Perhaps even in dying he felt repaid by those brief moments of pitying tenderness,—the only glimpse Fate had vouchsafed him of what might have been his.

With a sudden access of strength he raised himself, and, looking with steadfast eyes into her face, said slowly: "The Christ,—I will believe in Him, White Dawn, because He is your God, and you love Him."

Thus in his last hour had come that for which all her life she had prayed and striven.

In the solemn hush that followed his avowal, Grace, stifling the sobs that shook her, signed the cross upon his brow and repeated over him the sacred words of baptism. And even as she did so, she seemed to hear the wistful voice of Father Caron:

"Perhaps . . . another hand may sign the cross upon his brow," and she whispered, weeping, "Father, dear father, do you know your wish has been fulfilled? —Another—but oh, not worthier than you—has won his soul to Christ. His 'true soul' will not perish in the dark. It will pass from darkness to the presence of the true Light."

Even as the words trembled on her lips, they knew fulfilment. Flying Swallow drew a long slow breath like a sigh, and his head drooped with sudden weight against her breast. On that breath his soul passed. Through the darkness of savagery and heathenism his love and sacrifice had climbed to God.

An hour before dawn, Aubrey, his errand accomplished, turned homeward. He urged his horse for-

ward at full speed, for the undefined fear with which he had parted from Grace had not left him, and it took full possession of him now. He had not ridden far when a dull glow in the sky over St. Frédéric set his pulses beating with redoubled dread. Madly he galloped on, sick with a hideous fear, till, guided by the flames of the burning blockhouse, he came upon the solemn group that was gathered about Flying Swallow.

Speechless, he dismounted, and approached, quickly realizing the significance of the scene. It was the moment that Flying Swallow breathed his last. Aubrey saw Grace seize that lifeless hand and clasp it to her breast, and cover it with kisses, her body shaking with convulsive sobs. And standing silent, with bowed head, he knew that he owed to the man who lay dead at his feet not only his own life, but the life of the woman he had wed.

They made Flying Swallow's grave near the ruins of St. Frédéric—as much a martyr's grave as any rock-hewn sepulchre in San Calixto;—and they carved above it his name and the inscription: "Greater love hath no man than this." Grace set at the head of the grave the cross he at last had given her the right to place there—the cross that should guard his resting-place by the waters of Champlain till cross and grave alike should crumble and be effaced; and those who trod the ruined ramparts in the after-years should never dream that a hero slept below. But, till that day, that slender cross, that narrow mound, should without ceasing implore of every stranger "the passing tribute of a sigh."

On a certain sparkling midwinter morning Cicely Van Dersen, wrapped in rich furs, drove in her costly equipage along the streets of Albany. As her coachman paused for a moment to permit the passage of a loaded wain, Cicely's eyes caught sight of two faces in the gay throng which instantly arrested her attention. She had recognized Philip Aubrey and, beside him, a beautiful woman whom her quick intuition told her to be her rival. Enviously she gazed, murmuring, "I did not keep him from her after all!" And when she had reached her home, Cicely Van Dersen, who had wedded a man of wealth and title whom she did not love, bowed her proud head upon her hands, and wept bitter tears. Thus deeply had Aubrey's dallying wounded even this shallow heart.

On the 10th of February, 1763, the "Seven Years' War"—"the most picturesque and dramatic of American wars"—was ended by the treaty of peace between France and England known as the Peace of Paris. In this deadly struggle with the French and Indian, the colonists had learned the lessons which would fit them for the mightier struggle with the mother-country. The Seven Years' War was the prelude to the drama of the Revolution.

XXXIII

THE LAST TOKEN

"In the Abbey of Westminster
Wrote his name young Massachusetts;
Carved the word Ticonderoga
In the proud and pallid marble."

EIGHTEEN years!—that brief but momentous period that bridged the interval between the War with France and the War of the American Revolution. But yesterday—the Battle on the Plains of Abraham—that epoch-making battle;—today—Lexington and Concord, Bunker Hill and Trenton, and in this year of grace, 1777—Bennington and Saratoga. The star of the New Republic had risen to take its place in the galaxy of nations.

Philip Aubrey was a colonel now, commanding a regiment from New York, his adopted state; and the son of Grace and Philip Aubrey, George Augustus, named for that friend who had been the guardian spirit of both their lives, was serving as ensign in his father's regiment.

When the news of Lexington had reached Albany, the boy, not yet fifteen, had vainly begged to enlist. But on the 4th of July, 1776, his memorable sixteenth birthday, George came to his mother with a look of determination on his handsome young face that would not be denied. Grace saw it and her heart sank. The

war had taken her husband,—must it claim her son, still a child? But she was a true patriot, and she knew that boys as young were serving in the Continental ranks. With a brave spirit she kissed him, and sent him forth to battle for his country's freedom.

Yet it seemed to her a bitter irony that he should fight against that England which she had so loved, and for which, as a girl, she had been willing to risk her life; and on the anniversary of the day when she had met Lord Howe.

The lapse of years had not blurred his image in her heart; his face came before her now in perfect clearness. If her mind often reverted in wistful memory to that day of rare companionship with the man for whom she had dared so much, she was too loving and loyal to dwell in speculation on the might have been: whether,—Lord Howe having lived—she might not have come to love him; might not have found in him the ideal mate;—these thoughts—had they occurred to her—she would never have allowed to tarry in her mind.

Yet, setting love aside, this she knew: for the man who had gone to his death at Ticonderoga she had felt the purest friendship, the most fervent loyalty, that her heart could render. He had been—nay,—was—her dearest friend. The promise he had made to her was sacred; already it had been twice fulfilled,—ere long it was to be fulfilled again.

On an October day of this year 1777, Sir William Howe, commanding his Majesty's forces in America, sat alone in his tent. Fate frowned darkly upon him:

he had just received the news of his recall to England and the appointment of Clinton as his successor. So this was his reward for loyal service to his King!

His bitter reverie was interrupted by the entrance of an officer.

"I have to report, my lord, the capture of an American prisoner under suspicious circumstances."

"I will speak with him," said his lordship, and the prisoner was brought in. Sir William leaned forward, regarding him sternly. He had not his brother's gift of reading men; and he was not in a mood for mercy.

"So, sir, you have been captured as a spy. Is there any reason why you should not meet the fate of Nathan Hale?"

"My lord," the prisoner answered, "since you deem me a spy, I must endure that fate, for I have no proof beside my word that the papers found upon me were of private import only. A spy I am not,—yet, were I one, I would deem it not a shame but a glory to die the death of Nathan Hale."

"Peace, fellow!" said Sir William sharply. "You shall have your wish.—Within an hour you shall die the death of a spy."

The boy—he was only seventeen—turned very pale, but did not shrink.

"I ask only that this ring be sent to my mother"—a tremor, instantly controlled, was in his voice—"to tell her I died for my country."

He drew the ring from his finger and handed it to Sir William, who took it mechanically, regarding it at first absently, then with a sudden dawning of recog-

nition. For engraved on the seal were the three Wolves' Heads, and the name Howe. A cry burst from his lips.

"O God! my brother!" Then, recovering himself: "Boy, how came you by this?—it is my brother's ring!"

"Lord George gave it to my mother many years ago in token of a service she had rendered him. She was but a girl then, yet she made the dangerous journey from St. Frédéric to Fort William Henry to warn him of the French entrenchments at Ticonderoga. It was but two days before Lord Howe was killed."

Sir William turned the ring over in his hands. "Strange! strange!" he murmured. "Your name?"

"George Augustus Aubrey.—I was named for his lordship. My mother held his memory sacred. She has often told me he was the noblest man she ever knew.—He was my father's friend as well."

The boy spoke simply yet with deep feeling. He had his mother's beauty and his father's charm.

Sir William still sat entranced. "My brother's name! My brother's ring!" he repeated. Presently he looked up. "Then your mother was Grace Stuart!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my lord," said the boy, startled, "but how——"

"I will tell you: among my brother's papers I found a letter describing a beautiful girl, Grace Stuart, who had rendered him a great service and with whom he had been deeply impressed; and asking me,—in the event of his death, to search for her, and give her every advantage in my power—in fine, to befriend and pro-

tect her, as he had hoped to do. I sought for her at Ticonderoga and St. Frédéric, but in vain. All trace of her seemed to have been lost. All the years through, I have searched for her and without success until to-day."

Then, from the lips of her son, he heard the story of Grace Stuart from the hour she had parted with Lord Howe in the dusk at Sabbath-Day Point to the day of her marriage to Philip Aubrey at Quebec.

When the narrative was ended, Sir William spoke: "I served as a colonel under Wolfe and I knew Philip Aubrey—he was a captain then. I regret to say that I adjudged him traitor at Quebec, for events afterward proved me wrong. I heard of his miraculous escape from death but I did not see the girl who saved him nor did I learn her name. Grace Stuart!—Grace Stuart!—Strange how near I came to finding her. And now I have found her through her son! A bitter destiny that the son of Grace Stuart should draw his sword against the King of England. But, thank God, lad, for the impulse that moved you to give me this ring! What a hideous irony of Fate if after all these years I should have shed the blood of the son of her my brother loved!"

One autumn day of the year 1783,—the year the Revolution ended—a beautiful woman, still young, paused before a monument in Westminster Abbey.

Through a blur of tears she read the inscription:

"The Province of Massachusetts Bay in New England . . . caused this Monument to be erected to the Memory of George Augustus, Lord Viscount Howe,

. . . who was slain July 6, 1758, on his march to Ticonderoga, in the 34th Year of his Age; in Testimony . . . of the Affection their Officers and Soldiers bore to his Command." . . .

Grace sank to her knees and bowed her head in prayer. There swept over her afresh the debt of gratitude she owed to him whose name was written on this memorial stone; and her clasped hands grew wet with tears.

Her son touched her gently, remembering the link that bound him to the man who, though accounted dead, had, through a quarter of a century, kept the promise made to his mother on the shores of St. Sacrement that evening of midsummer in a camp of war.

"Dear friend," Grace Stuart whispered, "you kept your promise. 'Living and dying' you protected me. Through you the shadow of destiny was lifted. And now—the last token—you have given me back my son.—Until we meet in Heaven, dear friend and true, farewell!"

She bent forward, and her warm lips touched with a tender reverence the cold marble.

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